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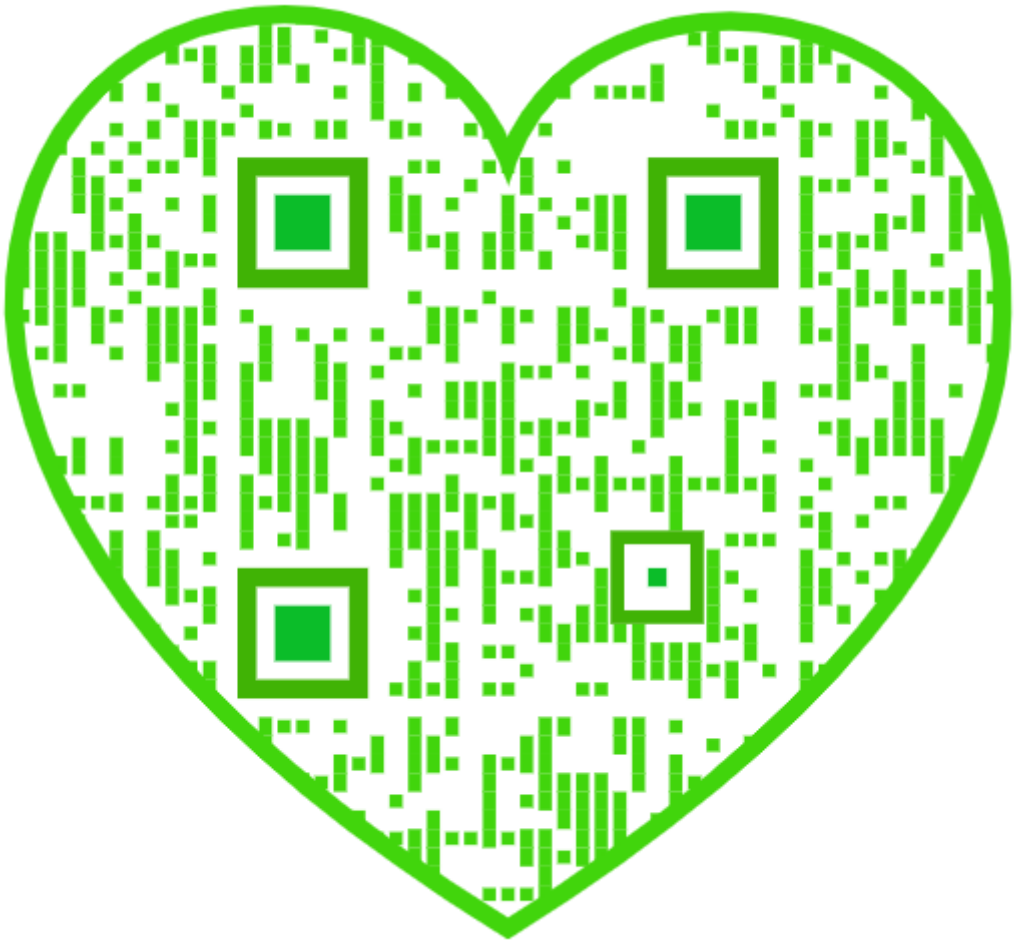

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American Journalism is produced on a Macintosh computer, using Microsoft Word and Pagemaker software. Authors of manuscripts accepted for publication are encouraged, but not required, to submit their work on a DOS or Macintosh disk.

SUBSCRIPTIONS. *American Journalism* (ISSN 0882-1127) is published quarterly by the American Journalism Historians Association, at the University of Tulsa. Subscriptions to *American Journalism* cost $25 a year, $10 for students, and include a one-year membership in AJHA. Subscriptions mailed outside the United States cost $30 for surface mail, $35 for air mail. For further information, please contact the Editor.

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FROM THE EDITOR •

ROLAND BARTHES used to speak of the "pleasure of the text." By that phrase he meant to praise the sensuous possibilities of writing and reading. Like many contemporary literary critics his tastes ran toward what we now call the postmodern; he favored texts that self-consciously (if not proudly) call attention to their own acts of narration, that play with the reader's sense of reality, that deny their own claims of authority and affirm the endlessly open possibilities of language.

That is *not* how journalists tell the story of their literary calling, of course. Journalism has imagined itself defending an Empire of Reality, solemnly patrolling the fact-fiction border alone in the darkness, doggedly protecting a society in which most citizens remain indifferent to the truth.

The articles in this issue demonstrate that journalism could offer a different history of itself, however, if it chose to ask a different set of questions. That alternative account would stress the literary qualities of even the humblest newspaper story, and the nature of journalism as a writerly occupation. Michael Robertson's close reading of Stephen Crane's newspaper sketches, for example, portrays those sketches as richly and deliberately literary—and superior, in many respects, to Crane's short fiction. This issue's other authors—John Bromley, Gary Whitby, Edna Boone Johnson and Mary Helen Brown, Larry Lorenz, Steve Jones—similarly argue that we need to understand journalistic writing as we would any literary text: as a form of symbolic action.

Journalism will continue to labor in the service of truth, and journalists will probably continue to imagine themselves as detectives, judges, therapists, business managers, and concerned citizens. But these articles remind us that those same journalists are also writers who dream, instigate, accuse, dissemble, wonder, play.

– J.P.

RESEARCH NOTES

THE ECONOMICS OF THE NEW JOURNALISM: THE CASE OF *ESQUIRE*

JACK NEWFIELD described New Journalism as amounting to good writers being turned loose by wise editors on real subjects. It is probably the most accurate description, in spite of all the words written to justify, explain, or condemn this form of journalism.

This essay examines the role of the editor in the publishing of what came to be called New Journalism in *Esquire* magazine. Its premise is that the organizational structure and economic imperatives of *Esquire* and other magazines played a crucial role in the publication of New Journalism. This explanation, in turn, discounts to some degree explanations that treat the New Journalism as a literary phenomenon arising out of the social and political turmoil of the sixties.

A great deal of information is already available on the writers who produced New Journalism. But who were the editors, and of more interest, why did the first editors decide to run those early pieces of New Journalism? What were the conditions operating in that magazine, in the offices, in the decision-making process? The one useful fact often cited in other studies was a noted shift in reading habits from fiction to nonfiction beginning in America in the late fifties. This shift showed up first in book publishing and then in magazines. An examination of *Esquire*'s tables of content from 1955 to 1964, for example, reveals that the January 1955 issue listed six articles of fiction, and the January 1961 issue only one work of fiction. By January 1964 the only fiction was the first of eight installments of Norman Mailer's serialized novel, *An American Dream*. The marketplace for writing and writers was changing, and a few wise editors would take note of this change and act upon it.

Esquire would offer a home to the new non-fiction for at least two reasons. First, *Esquire* had a history of being a writer's magazine. This history began with Arnold Gingrich and his association with writers such as Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Harold Hayes, who became the chief editor, continued to give good writers freedom to go beyond what he described as the conventional or formula magazine article.

Second, editors of *Esquire* in the sixties, facing strong competition, may have been forced by economic circumstances to reassess and perhaps risk more in order to redefine their own editorial niche. *Esquire* had not recovered its prewar character following World War II. Perhaps it did not need it. Like the rest of America, *Esquire* at first may have been satisfied with itself, sauntering and re-grouping through the fifties. Unfortunately, a new men's magazine appeared in 1953 and gave *Esquire* instant chase. Within five years of its launch, *Playboy* overtook *Esquire* in its circulation, and the older magazine found itself facing a major challenge for its readership, advertisers, and writers.

Various accounts portray the mood inside *Esquire*'s editorial offices as bleak, in disarray, or in a state of dynamic tension, depending on whose version one reads. Founding editor Arnold Gingrich, brought back on board to revive the magazine, hired three young, aggressive, and creative editors, all eager to inherit his kingdom. Thus began the "blood on the walls" era, named after the weekly editorial meetings sanguinely presided over by Gingrich.

Each week the three young editors—Hayes, Ralph Ginzburg, and Clay Felker—who from all accounts had little affection for one another, appeared in Gingrich's office with the requisite ten ideas. Each passionately pressed his personal notion of what *Esquire* should be or be-

come. No doubt some good must have come from so much passion, ambition, and brilliance pressed into one room. Hayes has written that the editors were "always, always pounding away on the Idea, ten a week from each staff editor until he either mutinied, buckled or broke through to some dazzlingly fresh concept which gained for the magazine another inch of new ground." Yet while these editors were thrashing it out, *Playboy* was beating up on *Esquire* where it counted—in circulation, advertising rates, and the bottom line. In 1960 *Esquire*'s estimated revenues were $13,833,252 to *Playboy*'s $5,794,842. By 1964, *Playboy* had taken the lead, with $15,720,264 in estimated revenues to *Esquire*'s $14,094,229.

Playboy's success was merely the latest in a series of challenges to *Esquire*. The early popularity of the magazine, following its founding in 1933, led to circulation outstripping its ad rates. In 1937, the circulation reached six hundred thousand, with a standard ad rate of $2,800, the going rate for a magazine with a circulation of four hundred thousand. In that year *Esquire*'s total ad revenue was $3.5 million, while its printing costs ran approximately $3 million.

With the outbreak of war, the magazine's misfortunes (in 1938 circulation fell from 728,000 to 453,999) were compounded. To qualify for a paper quota, *Esquire* contributed to the war effort by featuring the now-famous pin-up drawings of George Petty and Alberto Vargas. That got them their paper, but caused the postmaster general to deny the magazine access to second-class mailing privileges because of the "obscene, lewd, and lascivious character" of its content. These charges brought on a series of hearings that *Esquire* eventually won and that would in future years serve its competitor well. But the pin-ups had significantly altered the magazine's character. The girly-magazine image it acquired during the war years would stay with it for at least another decade.

By the time David Smart, co-founder and publisher, brought Gingrich back in 1952, *Esquire* had lost not only much of its readership but also a great deal of its reputation as a magazine of literary distinction. *Playboy*'s centerfolds soon made *Esquire* appear to be behind the times by at least ten years. The worst problem Gingrich faced on his return, however, was the loss of the magazine's writers. In terms of ideas, talent, and energy, *Esquire* in the mid-1950s seemed adrift.

Although *Playboy* rose in circulation from 311,725 in 1955 to 1,748,335 in 1964, Gingrich said that he could never think of it as direct competition. He saw *Playboy* not so much an imitation of *Esquire* but as an extension of the "girly" portion of *Esquire*'s formula. Yet *Playboy* proved a formidable challenger, first pulling away readers, then advertising dollars. Two other magazines started in the fifties also made inroads—*Sports Illustrated* and *Holiday*—taking part of the "new leisure" audience Gingrich had imagined in the 1930s.

It was at this time that Gingrich brought in Hayes, Ginzburg, and Felker. Each had a different idea of what *Esquire* needed to do. Hayes wanted the magazine to focus on ideas, especially controversial subjects. Ginzburg wanted to make it sexier, to meet the *Playboy* challenge more directly and explicitly. Felker thought it should serve as "survival manual" for the reader. When Ginzburg left in the 1960s, having had enough of the editorial battles, Felker became feature editor and Hayes articles editor.

Esquire had managed to accomplish one thing by 1958. The editors began assembling a group of contributing writers that more closely resembled the distinguished talent of the 1930s magazine. At least two writers who later appeared in the magazine and who became associated with or associated themselves with the term *New Journalism*—Terry Southern and Tom B. Morgan—were at this time writing for the magazine, but in the 1950s both were fiction writers.

Clearly the shift to nonfiction demonstrates the pressure of the marketplace. Editors were buying a great number of nonfic-

tion articles. Later in the sixties editors began looking for the established fiction writer to assign to specific nonfiction pieces. That shift indicates the response of editors in the marketplace, first buying what was new and in demand, and then pushing a new idea to its limits. Then as now, an editor's success depended on the ability to be fine-tuned to his or her readership, leading, but not too far out of the slipstream, the drift, hunger, and fantasy of the reading public.

Esquire seemed to represent a happy confluence of institutional values and marketplace. *Esquire* in the fifties was a magazine in trouble. It had not grown at a time when it faced its most serious challenger, and what little growth it evidenced could only be described as flat. *Playboy*'s circulation had dramatically increased. During this same period, there was questionable leadership in *Esquire*'s editorial offices, the sort of fragmentation that occurs when one generation is ending and the next contending for the rights of succession. If leadership existed, there was perhaps too much of it.

When Felker left the magazine in 1962, Hayes appeared to inherit the mantle, if not by decree then by tenacity. This, then, was the situation at the beginning of the sixties. Opportunity and risk presented themselves. If Tom Wolfe is right in putting his own keen eye and ear to the new style and sound of Talese's 1962 piece "Joe Louis: The King as a Middle-Aged Man," that may have been the first tiny step, the first trial balloon. It seems plausible, given that Talese became a frequent contributor to the magazine following that submission. In the next four years Talese contributed eighteen articles. In 1963 Tom Wolfe's first piece of New Journalism appeared in *Esquire*, a piece that was in part inspired by and reacting to the Talese piece.

The next thing the reader knew, *Esquire* started looking and sounding different—new, provocative, moving and shaking. As a result, the magazine may not have overtaken *Playboy* in the numbers game, but it found its own identity for that time, and recreated the possibilities of an expanded form of journalism.

While the magazine industry by its nature is not tied to the dailiness of the newspaper, it is still tied to the timeliness of popular culture. Magazines reflect the passions and interests, some passing, some steadfast, of their consumers. And writers who want to be published, or make a living, have to look at their choices. They can imitate or emulate what editors are buying. Or they can see what is left to do or try, what is new or different, and pursue that course, trusting there will be an editor who will recognize the possibilities and take the risk.

At the end of either road is the editor's desk. That editor because of all sorts of pressures and prejudices will accept one article, firmly convinced it clearly fits the formula or his perception of what will please the readers. Or the editor may accept another article simply because it is nothing like the usual fare. What the editor does not favor simply goes back to the writer, rejected, perhaps to make the rounds in other editorial offices.

Can it be mere coincidence that the two magazines that presented the earliest, the most, and the best New Journalism were *Esquire* under Harold Hayes and *New York* under Clay Felker, both men products of Gingrich and *Esquire*, both survivors of the blood-on-the-walls era?

. . . S. M. W. Bass
and Joseph Rebello
University of Kansas

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STEPHEN CRANE'S NEW YORK CITY JOURNALISM AND THE OFT-TOLD TALE

On the Literary Status of Journalism

Michael Robertson

THERE'S AN OFT-TOLD TALE about the relationship between journalism and literature in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries that goes like this: Starting in the 1890s, metropolitan newspapers became a training ground for would-be novelists. On assignment in the city streets, ambitious young writers encountered a gritty and varied urban reality that served as a source of literary material, while in the newsroom crusty editors with green eyeshades and blue pencils taught writers to strip the fat off their style and write a crisp prose well-suited to the modern novel. However, the story continues, writers had to know when to get out of journalism. Too long a stint on a newspaper could destroy a writer's creativity, turn him into a hack unable to produce anything besides newspaper copy. The newspaper was a school for novelists, the story tells us, but it was also a cemetery for talent that stayed too long.[1]

There is much truth to this school-and-cemetery story about the newspaper and the novel. As evidence, we have the sheer

1. This story about the relationship between journalism and American literature has been recounted most recently by Ronald Weber in *Journalism, Writing and American Literature*, Occasional Paper no. 5 (New York: Gannett Center for Media Studies, 1987). See also Tom Wolfe, *The New Journalism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 5–9, and Christopher P. Wilson, *The Labor of Words: Literary Professionalism in the Progressive Era* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 17–39. "The School in the Cemetery" is the title of Larzer Ziff's chapter on newspapers in *The American 1890s: Life and Times of a Lost Generation* (New York: Viking, 1966), 146–65. The statement that journalism is "either a school or a cemetery" comes originally from David Graham Phillips's newspaper novel *The Great God Success* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1901), 11. Howard Good describes numerous fictional versions of the school-and-cemetery story in *Acquainted With the Night: The Image of Journalists in American Fiction, 1890–1930* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1986). Shelley Fisher Fishkin tells a somewhat different story about journalism and literature in *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism and Imaginative Writing in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

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Michael Robertson is an assistant professor of English at Trenton State College. This article is adapted from his book in progress, *Stephen Crane Reporter: Journalism and the Making of Modern Literature.*

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number of important modern novelists who worked as reporters: Stephen Crane, Ambrose Bierce, Jack London, Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, Willa Cather, Ernest Hemingway, James M. Cain, Katherine Anne Porter, Sinclair Lewis, Eudora Welty, and William Kennedy, among others. In addition, we have the testimony of writers themselves. Lincoln Steffens, city editor of a New York City daily in the 1890s, said that every reporter on his staff had artistic ambitions. "My staff were writers," Steffens wrote in his *Autobiography*, "getting the news as material for poetry, plays, or fiction, and writing it as news for practice."[2] Ernest Hemingway, who went to work for the *Kansas City Star* straight out of high school, said years later that the *Star*'s style sheet contained "the best rules I ever learned for the business of writing. I've never forgotten them." Yet he also warned aspiring novelists to get out of journalism early in their careers. The value of newspaper work stops, he said, at "the point that it forcibly begins to destroy your memory. A writer must leave it before that point." Even then, Hemingway added, "he will always have scars from it."[3] Stephen Crane supposedly said, tersely, "I came near being swamped in journalism."[4]

Critics who have studied the relation between Stephen Crane's journalism and fiction agree, for the most part, with the school-and-cemetery view of newspaper work and with Crane's own negative assessment of journalism. One of the first critics to examine Crane's newspaper journalism wrote of the inevitable conflict between "reportage and serious fiction" and concluded that the principal benefit of Crane's newspaper experience was to strengthen and sharpen his talent for "more serious creative work."[5] In an influential 1973 essay, Tom Wolfe dismissed Crane's Bowery sketches as "just warm-ups for novels."[6] A recent critic wrote approvingly of Crane's effort "to seek out the higher truths of fiction, beyond the bare facts of journalism."[7]

However, in Stephen Crane's case, it is possible to tell a different tale about journalism and literature—a story in which the newspaper is not simply a training ground for the higher truths of fiction. Out of Crane's large body of journalism—which includes his precociously stylish correspondence from New Jersey shore resorts, written when he was a teenaged stringer for the *New-York Tribune*; travel articles from Mexico,

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2. *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1931), 339.
3. Charles Fenton, *The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Viking, 1954), 34, 262.
4. Quoted by Melvin Schoberlin in "Flagons of Despair," an unpublished biography of Crane. TS in the Schoberlin Collection, Syracuse University Library. I am grateful to James Colvert for drawing this quotation to my attention.
5. Joseph J. Kwiat, "The Newspaper Experience: Crane, Norris, and Dreiser," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 8 (September 1953): 103, 117.
6. Wolfe, *New Journalism*, 45.
7. Thomas A. Gullason, "The 'Lost' Newspaper Writings of Stephen Crane," *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier* 21 (Spring 1986): 68.

the American West, and Great Britain; and war correspondence from Greece and Cuba—I have chosen to focus on his New York City sketches. Most of these articles were written early in Crane's career, before the 1895 publication of *The Red Badge of Courage* made him famous. Yet only one can be neatly categorized as a "warm-up" for later fiction.[8] The chronology of Crane's New York City writing complicates any effort to treat journalism as mere preparation for literature; Crane wrote most of his New York sketches after he published his Bowery novel *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (A Story of New York)* in 1893.

Maggie, which portrays the sordid lives of New York slum dwellers, has received massive critical attention. Yet Crane's journalism, much of which also treats lower New York City's slums, has been much less read and studied. I want to focus on a few of the sketches in order to demonstrate that they reward the same close attention long given to Crane's fiction. However, I do not intend to argue that the sketches are good because they employ the "higher" techniques of fiction to brighten the newspaper's arid terrain. Crane's sketches, I show, fit into the conventions of 1890s journalism. And I use the contrasting example of New York City writing by Crane's literary friend William Dean Howells to argue that Crane's journalism is rewarding for readers not despite but because of its appearance in the newspaper.

Between 1892 and 1896, Crane published some two dozen journalistic pieces about New York. Almost all of his articles appeared in the Sunday edition of one of the city's newspapers. Late-nineteenth-century Sunday newspapers could accommodate a wide range of narrative forms, including short fiction, and Crane's newspaper work included short stories about New York.[9] He also wrote sketches that were not based on a single event but that instead offered a "pen picture" of some typical urban occurrence—the quoted phrase comes from the headline given to Crane's imaginative description of a tenement fire.[10]

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8. "Stories Told by an Artist," published in the *New York Press*, 28 October 1894, sec. 4, 6, was incorporated into Crane's novel *The Third Violet*. This sketch, along with the other Crane sketches cited in this article, is reprinted in both *The New York City Sketches of Stephen Crane*, ed. R. W. Stallman and E. R. Hagemann (New York: New York University Press, 1966), and *Tales, Sketches, and Reports* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1973), vol. 8, *The University of Virginia Edition of the Works of Stephen Crane*. In all cases my quotations are taken from the original publication. Since none of Crane's newspaper sketches occupies more than one page in its original appearance, publication information for these sources is given only once.

9. Stephen Crane, "Mr. Binks' Day Off," *New York Press*, 8 July 1894, sec. 4, 2; and "The Duel That Was Not Fought," *New York Press*, 9 December 1894, sec. 3, 2.

10. Stephen Crane, "When Every One Is Panic Stricken; A Realistic Pen Picture of a Fire in a Tenement," *New York Press*, 25 November 1894, sec. 4, 6. In their edition of Crane's New York City sketches, Stallman and Hagemann label this article "a hoax on the *New York Press*" and its editor, since there is no record of a tenement fire in late November 1894. However, the placement of Crane's article in the

However, most of Crane's New York articles appear to be based on actual events, and they follow the conventions of 1890s Sunday newspaper features.

A study of those conventions undermines the view of Stephen Crane as creative artist hampered by journalistic insistence on "bare facts." The newspaper sketch was a flexible form that borrowed from the conventions of both news reporting and fiction. The sketch arose early in American journalism, but it became a widely popular form in the 1880s, with the development of Sunday newspaper feature sections. Sketches from the 1880s and 1890s are generally free of proper nouns specifying an exact location, specific persons, or a definite time. Both journalists and readers of the era were less concerned with verifiable facts than with essential verities of urban life that, they believed, could best be approached through a portrayal of the typical.

Crane's earliest identified New York City sketch, "The Broken-Down Van," is representative of this Sunday-newspaper genre. Published in the *New-York Tribune* in 1892, the sketch begins, "The gas lamps had just been lit and the two great red furniture vans with impossible landscapes on their sides rolled and plunged slowly along the street."[11] Proper nouns are entirely absent from this lead, and the sketch never reveals the location, the date, or the participants' names. In its lack of specifics, the sketch fits squarely into the conventions of 1890s feature articles. The *Tribune* printed the piece under the heading "Travels in New-York," its title for an irregular Sunday series of features about the city. The sketch describes what ensues when a horse-drawn furniture van loses a wheel on a crowded rush-hour street in a poor downtown neighborhood. In its details of the van drivers' efforts to replace the wheel, hampered by the traffic surging past them and the unsolicited advice of passers-by, Crane's piece fits easily into the format of the humorous sketch. What distinguishes "The Broken-Down Van" is the way in which it pushes at the bounds of its comic format by subtly introducing the vice, crime, and sexual and economic exploitation that exist in lower Manhattan.

"The Broken-Down Van" begins by describing the flow of traffic through city streets. Its opening paragraph mentions not only the two furniture vans cited above but two modes of late nineteenth-century mass transportation: the streetcar and the elevated railway. These forms of rapid—at least for the era—transit had a profound effect on the way passengers perceived the city, for they made it possible for middle-class workers to travel between home and workplace while minimizing their encounter with the areas through which they passed. By the

Sunday feature supplement and its headline indicate that the *Press*'s editor understood the sketch to be a description of a typical urban event rather than a report of a specific fire.

11. [Stephen Crane], "The Broken-Down Van," *New-York Tribune*, 10 July 1892, 8.

1890s, with a population of over one and a half million, New York City was split into distinct districts separated not only by geography but by income, race, and ethnicity. Increasingly, New Yorkers in different parts of the city were strangers to one another, and new forms of urban transportation abetted that estrangement.

"The Broken-Down Van" puts a brake on movement through the city. When the van breaks down, the streetcars behind it are forced to a halt. The passengers—and Crane's readers—come to an abrupt stop in the middle of one of New York's poorest neighborhoods. Taking advantage of this static observation point, the sketch offers details of urban life that could easily be overlooked by someone passing through. The moment when the van loses its wheel illustrates the sketch's narrative strategy:

> [J]ust then the left-hand forward wheel on the rear van fell off and the axle went down. The van gave a mighty lurch and then swayed and rolled and rocked and stopped; the red driver applied his brake with a jerk and his horses turned out to keep from being crushed between car and van; the other drivers applied their brakes with a jerk and their horses turned out: the two cliff-dwelling men on the shelf half-way up the front of the stranded van began to shout loudly to their brother cliff-dwellers on the forward van; a girl, six years old, with a pail of beer crossed under the red car horse's neck; a boy, eight years old, mounted the red car with the sporting extras of the evening papers; a girl, ten years old, went in front of the van horses with two pails of beer; an unclassified boy poked his finger in the black grease in the hub of the right-hand hind van wheel and began to print his name on the red landscape on the van's side; a boy with a little head and big ears examined the white rings on the martingales of the van leaders with a view of stealing them in the confusion; a sixteen-year-old girl without any hat and with a roll of half-finished vests under her arms crossed the front platform of the green car. As she stepped up on to the sidewalk a barber from a ten-cent shop said "Ah! there!" and she answered "smarty!" with withering scorn and went down a side street.

Chronologically, this passage covers only a few minutes; grammatically, most of it is one long sentence. Yet the excerpt reveals an astonishing variety of New York street life, a world of child labor, petty crime, and vice that was normally overlooked by middle-class New Yorkers.

The normally hidden lower-class world revealed by the passage includes a swarm of unsupervised children in various

activities. Two boys engage in petty crimes of vandalism and theft, while two girls carry pails of beer. Other children are already at work: a boy sells newspapers; a teenaged girl, dressed immodestly by the era's standards (she wears no hat), carries clothing from her sweatshop job and adeptly brushes off sexual advances from strangers. Remarkably, the narrator avoids comment on any of these activities, all of which violate the era's ideals of childhood. The passage displays a rigorous moral neutrality reinforced by a neutrality of grammar and syntax. The long central sentence is constructed of parallel independent clauses, interchangeable in their structure. The children working, carrying beer, or committing petty crimes receive the same textual emphasis as drivers applying their brakes or shouting to one another.

The dispassionate observation of the passage continues throughout "The Broken-Down Van," which alternates between the drivers' comic efforts to repair the van and the street life swirling about them. Children hawk newspapers and carry beer; a drunk sings; pawnbrokers look out of their shops; the ten-cent barber keeps trying to pick up women. One of the women the barber approaches has a black eye; in this case, too, the narrator refuses comment and speculation, leaving it to readers to draw their own conclusions.

In place of the moralistic and sentimental perspectives common in 1890s journalism, "The Broken-Down Van" offers a morally neutral visual perspective, in which crime and vice are as much a part of city life as traffic jams. Working within the traditional form of the comic sketch, Crane upsets audience expectations and offers to the middle- and upper-class readers of the eminently respectable *Tribune* a new way of perceiving city life.

"The Broken-Down Van" takes a typical local color subject but is narrated by a dispassionate observer who withholds judgment on the scene. "Heard on the Street Election Night," published in the *New York Press* after an 1894 New York City election, is a formally innovative piece that dispenses with a narrator altogether. Reflecting Crane's interest in vernacular speech, "Heard on the Street" consists solely of disconnected fragments of overheard conversation. The sketch's headline reveals that it contains "Passing Remarks Gathered in Front of 'The Press' Stereopticon," a projector that flashed election results on a wall.[12] However, the sketch itself dispenses with any

12. "Heard on the Street" is preserved in an undated clipping in Stephen Crane's scrapbooks in the Crane Collection, Columbia University Library. While the article was clearly printed in the *New York Press* sometime after the November 1894 municipal election, no researcher has discovered the edition. Presumably, the article appeared in some edition of the newspaper that has not been preserved. Stallman and Hagemann, *New York City Sketches*, 103–7, and the University of Virginia edition, 333–37, reprint the article.

setting of the scene, physical description of the speakers, or other narrative connection. Crane did not repeat the experiment of relying solely on dialogue. But other sketches reveal his dual interests in reproducing vernacular speech and subverting narrative conventions.

"The Men in the Storm," an 1894 sketch set during a blizzard, explicitly draws attention to the convention of the middle-class narrator. After briefly describing the blizzard in its first paragraph, the sketch continues, "All the clatter of the street was softened by the masses [of snow] that lay upon the cobbles until, even to one who looked from a window, it became important music."[13] What follows details the observations of this "one" safely ensconced behind a window. The observer draws "recollections of rural experiences" from the sight of men shoveling snowdrifts. He finds the lighted shop windows "infinitely cheerful." And he discerns "an absolute expression of hot dinners in the pace of the people" hurrying toward home (662). The sketch emphasizes the solid assumptions of this middle-class observer, a person with sufficient means to be familiar with rural scenes, with the pleasures of shopping in cheerfully lighted stores, with hot dinners and a comfortable home. The text comments, "as to the suggestion of hot dinners, he was in firm lines of thought, for it was upon every hurrying face. It is a matter of tradition; it is from the tales of childhood" (663).

The sketch underlines the observer's conviction of the universality of his experience and beliefs. Yet it also subtly suggests that his beliefs are based on a childish naïveté. The narrative in some sense sets up this middle-class onlooker, the better to undercut him in the next paragraph, which reads in full: "However, in a certain part of a dark West-side street, there was a collection of men to whom these things were as if they were not. In this street was located a charitable house where for five cents the homeless of the city could get a bed at night and, in the morning, coffee and bread" (663). From this point on, "The Men in the Storm" abandons the complacent middle-class observer and thrusts readers into the midst of the homeless men in the street waiting for the charity to open, into a world where the benign assumptions of the comfortable observer are not simply wrong but irrelevant—"as if they were not."

In writing about a group of homeless men waiting at twilight for the doors of a charity to open, Crane took on a familiar subject. Numerous reporters observed breadlines at about the same time as Crane, including Jacob Riis, who published an article on police lodging houses in the *New York World* in 1893. Like Crane's feature, Riis's article is set in a winter storm, and

13. Stephen Crane, "The Men in the Storm," *Arena* 10 (October 1894): 662. Page numbers of subsequent quotations are cited parenthetically in the text.

its opening may have served as a model for "The Men in the Storm." Riis's article begins, "Strung along the iron railing in front of the Mulberry street police station stood on one of the recent stormy evenings a line of ragged, shivering men and women. It had been there, at first a little knot at the locked area door, since before the twilight set in, and now it was fast deepening into the darkness of night."[14] But Riis's sketch soon moves in a quite different direction from Crane's. In his third paragraph Riis introduces two young men, "decently dressed mechanics" out of a job, who are contrasted with the "hardened old tramps" who make up most of the men in line. The first half of Riis's lengthy article takes the perspective of the two mechanics, showing their disgust at conditions in the police station lodgings for the homeless. The last half is a bogus "interview" with Riis himself—the *World* printed the sketch unsigned—in which he offers solutions to the bad conditions in the police lodgings and to the "tramp nuisance" that, he says, underlies the whole problem.

By adopting the point of view of the mechanics and then including his lengthy self-interview, Riis provides readers with a firm, resolutely middle-class perspective on the homeless men and women seeking shelter. In contrast, Crane's sketch abandons any stable narrative point of view, deliberately unsettling readers as it moves from one perspective to another. The sketch opens with the point of view of the "one" who watches from a window, then abandons this observer and thrusts readers into the midst of the crowd of men. The anonymous third person narrator is seemingly located somewhere in the crowd, yet he does not long maintain a single perspective. He speculates about how the crowd might appear viewed directly from above, briefly takes the perspective of a merchant staring down at the men from the window of a dry-goods shop across the street, and then shifts back into the crowd of men as they taunt this well-dressed observer.

"The Men in the Storm" rejects both a stable narrative position and any solution to the problem of the homeless men. The sketch's silence on larger issues of homelessness, poverty, and unemployment is remarkable, considering both the context of 1890s journalism and the venue in which the sketch appeared. Crane's contemporary Jacob Riis used the long description of police station lodgings in his *World* article largely as prelude to a proposal for solving the "tramp nuisance" in New York City; Riis wanted to force tramps to work in exchange for lodging. Crane's sketch appeared in a journal that served as a forum for debate on similar proposals. "The Men in the Storm" was published in the October 1894 issue of the *Arena*, a politically

14. [Jacob Riis], "Police Lodgings," *New York World*, 12 February 1893, 25. This unsigned article is included in Riis's scrapbooks, Jacob A. Riis Papers, Library of Congress.

progressive monthly magazine edited by the well-known reformer and Christian socialist Benjamin O. Flower. Like other articles in the *Arena*, "The Men in the Storm" is a work of social protest, for it implicitly challenges an economic system that divides Americans into comfortable observers and the impoverished homeless. Yet in its tone the sketch stands out from the *Arena*'s usual articles. Just as "The Broken-Down Van" rejects the prevailing middle-class moralism of the staid, solidly Republican *Tribune*, "The Men in the Storm" rejects the *Arena*'s moralistic condemnations of social injustice. Crane's sketch is more subtly—and more fundamentally—radical, for it questions concepts of free will and human identity shared by the producers and readers of both the *Tribune* and the *Arena*.

"The Men in the Storm" locates its subjects not only within the mean streets of 1894 New York City but within a timeless, unlocalized landscape that is depicted as a battleground between a powerful and pitiless nature and weak, insignificant humankind. Like the characters in Crane's well-known short story "The Blue Hotel," set in a howling Nebraska blizzard, the men in the New York storm are battered by natural forces that seem to determine their behavior. Every action they take in the sketch is controlled by the desire to protect themselves from the cold of the storm and to find food and shelter. Frequently they are reduced by the language of the text to animals engaged in a Darwinian struggle. Crane appropriates the language of nineteenth-century biological determinism in his comment, "With the pitiless whirl of snow upon them, the battle for shelter was going to the strong" (666).

Yet this determinist perspective is not allowed to stand as a single, stable explanation; it is only a temporary point of view. The men's behavior may be determined by the storm that beats upon them, but their identity depends upon the fluid language and shifting narrative perspective of Crane's text. The men's very humanity is provisional in the narrator's hands. Viewed from above, they are nothing but "a heap of snow-covered merchandise." From ground level, the narrative transforms them through metaphor and simile. The sketch is dense with figures of speech that either fracture the men into outerwear or body parts—they are in close succession "a heap of old clothes" and a "collection of heads"—or that suppress their humanity—they are called a "mass," a "wave," a "stream," "sheep," "grass," "ogres," and "fiends." Through its shifting, dehumanizing descriptions of its subjects, "The Men in the Storm" calls into question the identity not only of these homeless tramps but, by extension, of the "one" who observes, the well-dressed merchant, and Crane's readers. In its challenge to a society that identifies people on the basis of social and economic class, "The Men in the Storm" fits in squarely with the *Arena*'s reformist perspective. But Crane's sketch outflanks the

magazine's usual reform articles, calling into question not only class hierarchy but stable human identity.[15]

The questions of free will and identity raised by "The Men in the Storm" are confronted even more directly in Crane's paired sketches "An Experiment in Misery" and "An Experiment in Luxury," published on successive Sundays in the *New York Press* in April 1894. The experiment, a common newspaper genre during the 1890s, was the report of a journalist who participated in some uncommon experience in order to write about it.[16] For the first of his experiments, Crane dressed as a tramp and slept in a Bowery flophouse. For the second, he donned a dinner jacket and reported on his meal at the home of a Fifth Avenue millionaire, the father of a college friend.

Crane's dual subjects of misery and luxury were not in themselves unconventional; the juxtaposition of poverty and wealth was a common trope in the era.[17] His paired sketches treat a familiar theme, yet they are free of the moralizing, sentimentality, and proposals for reform that were common to other discussions of the misery/luxury contrast. Instead, Crane uses a conventional newspaper form to conduct experiments in perception and identity. Crane's stories play on the scientific connotations of the word *experiment*, and show how the consciousness of the experimenting reporter is transformed by the successive catalysts of poverty and wealth.

"An Experiment in Misery" appeared in the *New York Press* on 22 April 1894. While the *Press* had printed other experiments in which the reporter impersonated a poor person, the timing of "An Experiment in Misery" ensured that it would be read as a politically charged document, since it appeared at the height of a national hysteria caused by the march on Washington of Coxey's Army.[18] Jacob Coxey, an Ohio businessman with an interest in economic reform, had been galvanized into action by the widespread unemployment following the 1893 financial panic. He organized a group of unemployed men—largely wanderers who at the time were dubbed "tramps"—to march from Ohio to Washington, D.C., where Coxey intended to

15. My reading of "The Men in the Storm" draws on Alan Trachtenberg's interpretation in "Experiments in Another Country: Stephen Crane's City Sketches," *Southern Review* 10 (April 1974): 265–85.

16. The *World*, New York City's largest newspaper at the time, included at least one experiment in virtually every Sunday issue during 1894, the year Crane's two experiments appeared.

17. One example of the misery/luxury contrast from the thousands available during the 1890s will suffice. The widely circulated Populist Party platform of 1892 includes a reference to "the two great [American] classes—tramps and millionaires." Quoted in Robert Dallek, *The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs* (New York: Knopf, 1983) 4.

18. For examples of other experiments, see the following articles printed in the *Press* shortly before Crane's experiments appeared: "A Tour of the Charities; Experiences of a Press Reporter Who Applied for Aid," 14 January 1894, sec. 2, 2; and "A Night with Outcasts," 11 March 1894, sec. 4, 2.

present to Congress his scheme for eliminating unemployment through public works projects. Coxey's Army, as it came to be known, left Massillon, Ohio, on 25 March 1894. By 22 April, when Crane's sketch appeared, the army was less than one hundred miles from Washington, provoking widespread disdain and panic among the middle and upper classes. Throughout the spring of 1894, newspapers—including the *New York Press*—were filled with denunciations of Coxey and his followers. The hysterical edge to much of the press coverage can be attributed less to Coxey's rather modest demands than to the wave of violent strikes and anarchist agitation that characterized the 1880s and 1890s and to the rising crescendo of public nervousness about what was known as the "Tramp Menace."

The American tramp was largely a creation of the 1870s, when an economic depression and the rapid expansion of the nation's railways system combined to create a large class of unemployed men who relied on the trains for a nomadic way of life. Within a few years, the tramp had replaced the Indian as a sort of national bogeyman, a locus for the strains and fears generated by America's expanding, unstable, and unjust economic system. By 1877, the dean of the Yale Law School was fulminating, "As we utter the word *Tramp*, there arises straightaway before us the spectacle of a lazy, incorrigible, cowardly, utterly depraved savage."[19] Jacob Riis, who had himself gone on the road after he emigrated to America in 1870, was one of the most strident critics of the tramp, peppering his newspaper articles and books with denunciations of tramps.[20]

The combination of two decades of warnings against the Tramp Menace, an immediate crisis of massive unemployment, and the near approach of Coxey's Army to the nation's capital meant that Stephen Crane's experiment among New York City's homeless appeared at a moment when fears of the tramps that Crane wrote about had reached a fever pitch. Remarkably, for Crane these fears were as if they were not. Crane wrenches the tramp out of the immediate context of economics, politics, and journalistic hysteria. Never acknowledging the "tramp problem," "An Experiment in Misery" instead focuses on

19. Francis Wayland, quoted in John Seelye, "The American Tramp: A Version of the Picaresque," *American Quarterly* 15 (Winter 1963): 541. For further background on tramps, see Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (New York: Verso, 1987), 149–57. On Coxey's Army, see Carlos A. Schwantes, *Coxey's Army: An American Odyssey* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985). Denunciations of Coxey's Army in the *New York Press* and other newspapers are too numerous to cite; Schwantes gives numerous examples of the press coverage.

20. For examples, see Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890; reprint, New York: Dover, 1971), 61–67; "Police Lodgings," cited above; and the following articles in the Riis Papers, Library of Congress: "The Tramps Marching," *New York World*, 25 June 1883; "The Station House Lodgers," *New-York Tribune*, 31 January 1892; and "New York's Wayfarers' Lodge," *Christian Union*, 2 December 1895.

problems of perception and understanding. Crane writes as if the common concerns of Riis and other writers—the tramp as threat to morality, property, and social order—did not exist. Instead, he is concerned with the middle-class person's lack of knowledge about the tramp's inner life.

While most journalistic experiments were written as first person reports, Crane uses third person and, avoiding proper names, casts himself as "the youth." The technique allows Crane to present this thinly disguised version of himself as a character akin to the protagonist of the novel that he had just completed in the spring of 1894. Like Henry Fleming in *The Red Badge of Courage*, who is most often called "the youth," the young man in "An Experiment in Misery" begins as a naif who is educated by his searing experiences.

"Misery" opens with the youth's reflections as he and a friend observe a tramp. "I wonder how he feels," the youth says to his friend. "I suppose he is homeless, friendless, and has, at the most, only a few cents in his pocket. And if this is so, I wonder how he feels."[21] Crane's opening emphasizes through repetition its epistemological concerns: "I wonder how he feels." The youth sees the tramp as a problem in consciousness; his friend replies that his question can be answered not by theory but only by empirical test. "You can tell nothing of it unless you are in that condition yourself," the friend advises. "It is idle to speculate about it from this distance." Their distance from the tramp is twofold: both spatial and cognitive. Crane's experiment in misery is an attempt to bridge both distances.

The sketch almost immediately confronts the youth's epistemological queries; he tells his friend that he intends to dress in "rags and tatters" in order to "discover [the tramp's] point of view." He borrows an outfit from an artist friend and late on a rainy night begins "a weary trudge toward the downtown places, where beds can be hired for coppers." The sketch continues: "By the time he had reached City Hall Park he was so completely plastered with yells of 'bum' and 'hobo,' and with various unholy epithets that small boys had applied to him at intervals that he was in a state of profound dejection, and looked searchingly for an outcast of high degree that the two might share miseries." Already, at the commencement of his experiment, the young man has abandoned his confident, reflective stance and is profoundly dejected. Oppressed by the middle-class disdain expressed in the boys' taunts, he seeks an alliance with a member of the other half; the experimental transformation of his consciousness has begun.

As the sketch continues, the young man loses all will, turning from a middle-class experimenter who deliberately embarks

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21. Stephen Crane, "An Experiment in Misery," *New York Press*, 22 April 1894, sec. 3, 2.

upon a project into a plastic creature controlled by his environment. When he spots a saloon that advertises "Free hot soup tonight," he is "caught by the delectable sign"; he "allowed himself to be swallowed" by the saloon's swinging doors. The verbs emphasize the young man's passivity and the corresponding power of his surroundings.

When he leaves the saloon, the youth meets a drunken tramp whom the narrator dubs "the assassin." Serving as a sort of derelict Virgil to the youth's Dante, the assassin leads the young man to a seven-cent lodging house where they spend the night. Crane's description of the youth's sleepless night is an artistic tour-de-force, a barrage of violent metaphors that, taken together, reflect the young man's disoriented mental state. Crane employs deliberately startling similes—the odors in the room assail the young man "like malignant diseases with wings"; the sleeping men heave and snore "with tremendous effort, like stabbed fish" —that disconcert the reader, leaving us as vulnerable and open to change as the young man.

As critic Benedict Giamo points out, the youth's sleepless night serves as an initiation ceremony, signaling his change from one identity to another.[22] When he leaves the tramp lodging house in the morning, the youth "experienced no sudden relief from unholy atmospheres. He had forgotten all about them, and had been breathing naturally and with no sensation of discomfort or distress." The youth's acceptance of the lodging house stench signals a change in physical perception; by the end of the sketch, all his perceptions are similarly changed.

The sketch concludes as the youth and the assassin walk to City Hall Park, where they sit down "in the little circle of benches sanctified by traditions of their class." With the plural possessive pronoun, the narrator subtly places the experimenter in the same socioeconomic class as the professional tramp. The passage that follows reveals how an experiment that initially involved a change only of clothing and sleeping place has become a transformation of consciousness:

> The people of the street hurrying hither and thither made a blend of black figures, changing, yet frieze like. They walked in their good clothes as upon important missions, giving no gaze to the two wanderers seated upon the benches. They expressed to the young man his infinite distance from all that he valued. Social position, comfort, the pleasures of living, were unconquerable kingdoms. He felt a sudden awe. . . .
>
> He confessed himself an outcast, and his eyes from under the lowered rim of his hat began to

22. Benedict Giamo, *On the Bowery: Confronting Homelessness in American Society* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 93–100.

> glance guiltily, wearing the criminal expression that comes with certain convictions.

The young man has become so distanced from the middle-class people with whom he formerly identified that he can no longer see them as individuals; they have become a "blend of black figures." And just as the affluent customarily stare past the homeless, not really seeing them or recognizing their common humanity, the young man no longer recognizes the middle-class passers-by as three-dimensional people; they are transformed into a flat "frieze," a metaphor that suggests something foreign, exotic, and archaic. The young man has completely assumed the perceptions of the outcast tramp. The passage reveals that he has also assumed the tramp's convictions, ideas about social inequality that the larger society would consider "criminal."

Like "The Men in the Storm," "An Experiment in Misery" never directly addresses the issues that were central to other discussions of poverty and unemployment in the 1890s: politics, economics, morality, public safety, property rights, charity, reform, and revolution. It would not have been possible, in any case, to advocate radical political and economic change in the pages of the *New York Press;* the newspaper proclaimed in its masthead its allegiance to the Republican party. Yet, again like "The Men in the Storm," "Misery" is a fundamentally radical work that challenges common belief in a stable human self. It portrays the young man as a creature of his environment who assumes a completely new consciousness as his circumstances change. The sketch obliterates distinctions between social classes, showing how easily a member of the "respectable" classes can be transformed into a tramp.

The companion sketch, "An Experiment in Luxury," also reveals human identity as provisional and fluid. In this sketch, the young man of "Misery" dines at the Fifth Avenue home of a college friend, son of a famous millionaire. Like "Misery," "Luxury" begins by focusing on the changes that this experiment induces in the youth's consciousness. But while "Misery" records the young man's steady change from a middle-class perspective to his assumption of an outcast's perceptions and convictions, in "Luxury" the youth's perceptions swing back and forth. The youth enters the millionaire's Fifth Avenue mansion "with an easy feeling of independence," but he is quickly awed by the supercilious servant who opens the door, and he retreats into emotional self-abasement. Once in his friend's comfortable room, his emotions swing again, and he assumes the self-satisfaction of the wealthy, a complacency undercut by the narrator's irony:

> Presently he began to feel that he was a better man than many—entitled to a great pride. He stretched his legs like a man in a garden, and he thought that he belonged to the garden. . . .

> In this way and with this suddenness he arrived at a stage. He was become a philosopher, a type of the wise man who can eat but three meals a day, conduct a large business and understand the purposes of infinite power. He felt valuable. He was sage and important.[23]

In his friend's room, the youth takes on the perspective of the rich and powerful, but as soon as they descend to the family's drawing room, he loses his "delightful mood" and mentally bows down before the splendor embodied in the mansion's lavish decoration.

The youth's quick changes in consciouness, his swings between pride and envious humility, reveal the instability of upper-class assumptions of superiority. Together, "Misery" and "Luxury" destroy the common belief in class divisions as natural and inevitable, based upon intrinsic individual qualities. On successive Sundays, Crane's young man rockets between the middle, lower, and upper classes, assuming a new class identity and consciousness as easily he dons a dinner jacket or a tattered overcoat. Crane employs the conventional form of the journalistic experiment for radical ends, upsetting his audience's convictions about social divisions and human identity.

Despite his complaints about journalism, quoted at the beginning of this essay, later in his career Stephen Crane acknowledged that "some of my best work is contained in short things which I have written for various publications, principally the *New York Press*," and he revised and reprinted several of his New York sketches.[24] Ignored for the most part by journalism scholars and studied by literary critics largely as background to his fiction, Crane's New York City sketches deserve to stand on their own.

As I suggested earlier, the high quality of Crane's sketches comes not despite but, at least in part, because of their appearance in newspapers. The work of Crane's literary mentor William Dean Howells stands in illuminating contrast. During the 1890s, Howells occasionally wrote nonfiction pieces on the same subjects of unemployment and poverty in lower New York City that absorbed his young friend. While his subject matter is similar to Crane's—a midnight breadline, Lower East Side tenements, street beggars—Howells's use of the belles-lettres essay form resulted in radically different work.[25] In his essay about a winter's night breadline, for example, Howells observes the

23. Stephen Crane, "An Experiment in Luxury," *New York Press*, 29 April 1894, sec. 3, 2.

24. Stephen Crane to William Howe Crane, 29 November 1896, *The Correspondence of Stephen Crane*, ed. Stanley Wertheim and Paul Sorrentino, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 1:265.

25. Howells's 1890s essays on New York City are collected in *Impressions and Experiences* (New York: Harper's, 1896) and *Literature and Life* (New York: Harper's, 1902). The three subjects mentioned are found, respectively, in "The Midnight

men from the vantage point of a comfortable carriage, from which he never alights. Howells remains in the role of the genteel literary observer, and the real subject of his New York essays is not the poor themselves so much as it is the unbridgeable gulf between the essayist and those he sees. In contrast, the routines of newspaper work discouraged a distant observer's stance. Crane was following the lead of dozens of other reporters when he plunged into the midst of a crowd of homeless men and donned shabby clothes to enter a Bowery lodging house.

Howells's ruminative essays, in which the narrator remains distant from his subjects, look back to the European literary tradition. Crane's newspaper sketches, which thrust us into their subjects' lives, look forward to groundbreaking twentieth-century works by Theodore Dreiser and Jack London. Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900), for example, draws directly on Dreiser's own experiences as a reporter, as well as on Crane's New York City sketches.[26] Part of its striking novelty comes from the way in which Dreiser rejects the distant literary stance of Howells's essays and novels about urban life and instead enters into the consciousness of his lower-class characters. Crane's sketches also influenced one of the new century's first major works of literary nonfiction, London's *The People of the Abyss* (1903), an extended experiment conducted in the city of London's impoverished East End.

New York City newspapers provided Stephen Crane with the opportunity to write some of the finest short works of his career. Using the conventional forms of the Sunday newspaper sketch, Crane produced innovative work as complex and challenging as his finest fiction. Crane's New York journalism upsets the literary hierarchy that assigns an inferior role to journalism and forces us to reconsider the tales we tell about journalism and literature in modern America.*

Platoon," in *Literature and Life*, 154–60, and "An East-Side Ramble" and "Tribulations of a Cheerful Giver," in *Impressions and Experiences*, 124–49, 150–88.

26. On *Sister Carrie*'s debts to Crane and to Dreiser's newspaper work, see Ellen Moers, *Two Dreisers* (New York: Viking, 1969), 3–69.

*My thanks to Michelle Parham Preston for her comments on a draft of this essay.

"TRIFLING WITH EDGED TOOLS"

Henry Adams's Letters to the *New York Times*, 1861–62

John C. Bromley

FROM THE EARLY SUMMER OF 1861 to January of the following year a series of anonymous letters about Anglo-American affairs appeared in the *New York Times* that must have impressed contemporary readers as remarkably well informed and authoritative. In fact these letters were written in secret by Henry Adams, the son and private secretary of the Lincoln government's new American Minister Plenipotentiary to England, former Massachusetts Congressmen Charles Francis Adams. The minister knew nothing of the letters.[1]

This survey examines the Adams-*Times* letters as journalism, as a systematic interpretation over time of American affairs at a time of grave crisis. Henry Adams in 1861 was a reporter, and an ambitious one, and this paper focuses on Adams not as the icon of high culture that he became but as chronicler and analyst. His 1861 letters from London have as their central theme the possibility of British intervention in the American Civil War, and offer as well a sharp critique of English life and politics. Adams's London letters are, it is urged here, of importance both as primary source documents and as the product of broad, shrewd, and well-informed, if youthful, observation. In these remarkable letters the issues of the war are preserved, fresh and urgent, just as they were before the war touched and transformed them.

The Adams letters were produced in great secrecy, unknown to anyone except the author, his brother Charles, and Henry Raymond, with whom the arrangement to write them had been made. The State Department had explicitly forbidden contact with the press,

1. Ernest Samuels, *The Young Henry Adams* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), 97–98. I have also used Edward Chalfant's *Both Sides of the Ocean* (Hampden, Conn.: Archon, 1982), in which the 1861–62 Adams letters to the *New York Times* are treated as significant sources of biographical information, to confirm details. Charles Glicksberg's "Henry Adams and the Civil War," *Americana* 33 (October 1939): 433–62, was the first study of these letters.

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an instruction that Minister Adams had transmitted to his staff. It is testament to Henry Adams's ambition that he was willing to risk by night the integrity of the mission for which he labored by day. Certainly part of the very temperamental quality of the letters resulted not just from the pressure of the flood of bad news from home, but as well from the strain of risking his father's, and the State Department's, disapproval.[2]

A third-generation diplomat, cold and careful Charles Francis Adams was made minister just after his patron and ally William Seward became secretary of state. Charles Sumner had wanted the place the elder Adams got, and the fact that the moderate Adams was chosen as the Lincoln administration's man in London was a portent of war for the Union rather than a crusade against slavery. With Seward the elder Adams had watched through the secession winter for a sign of willingness to compromise, and as a member of the Congressional Committee of Thirty-Three, charged with finding ways to peace, Adams had watched carefully and waited well, if in vain.[3]

Seward, the new secretary of state, thought that Adams's mission to London would have been only more watching, more waiting, were it not for the possibility of British intervention:

> It would seem that you would find nothing more to do in London than to observe and report current events, and to cultivate friendly sentiments towards the United States. Nevertheless, the particular condition of our country in the present juncture . . . [makes] your task . . . apparently so simple and easy, [one which] involves the responsibility of preventing the commission of an act [i. e., recognition] by the [English] government . . . which would be fraught with disaster, perhaps ruin, to our own.[4]

Yet Seward, new to diplomacy and as well as to the stresses of civil war, seemed himself to want Anglo-American war within a month, writing Adams that "war in defense of national life is not immoral."[5] Seward, whose letter to Adams Lincoln had modified, soon thought better, however, and wrote Adams later in the summer that "however otherwise I may at any time have been understood, it has been an earnest and profound solicitude to avert foreign war that alone has prompted the emphatic and sometimes, perhaps, impassioned remonstrances I have made."[6] The light by which

2. Samuels, *Young Adams*, 101. Samuels notes Adams's general irritability, and suggests that it was partly physiological. Charles Glicksberg, by contrast, felt that Adams in 1861–62 "did not allow his feelings to distort his vision." Glicksberg, "Henry Adams," 461.
3. Martin Duberman, *Charles Francis Adams, 1807–1886* (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), 220–57.
4. Seward to Adams no. 2, *Executive Documents*, 37th Cong., 2d sess., 1861, 1:71.
5. Seward to Adams no. 10, *Executive Documents*, 1:90.
6. Seward to Adams no. 42, *Executive Documents*, 1:118.

Charles Francis Adams was supposed to be guided flickered and sometimes dimmed. But as much from Adams family instinct as from his instructions, the elder Adams drew the organizing theme of his mission: his sense that Anglo-American comity was to be had at any price less than the building of a Confederate navy in English shipyards.[7]

For Henry Adams to watch his father, as his father and grandfather had watched their fathers in other American national crises, was an opportunity to learn the nuances of politics and diplomacy that were his new craft. Watching his father, Seward, and Sumner in the secession winter just past had been instructive as well. And as his father's private secretary, in London as in Congress the year before, Henry Adams had a matchless vantage point. His access to official information, though he had to trade timeliness for it, was virtually complete, and he was where the war would be most likely to be lost if the Union were to lose in the war's first year.

He had written other newspaper letters, if not on so ambitious a scale, and in this sense he was, both as a free lance and as a politician's son, a careful observer of the press. As private secretary he was at first convinced that public opinion was with the Union, and that only a belligerent press impeded the English from taking their natural pro-Union side. Less than two months after his arrival he wrote his brother Charles that: "My letters in the *Times* will give you pretty much all I have to say about politics. . . . the English are really on our side; of that I have no doubt whatever."[8] He was particularly bitter against the London *Times*: "Knowing that the [London] *Times* touches nothing it does not disfigure, and states nothing it does not misrepresent, I was very slow to credit its views."[9] He was no fonder of the *New York Herald*, which he called representative of "the lowest print that has ever disgraced a great nation."[10]

7. Adams was blind to Seward's limitations, and when Seward died in 1873 Adams praised Seward as the brains of the Lincoln administration. Gideon Welles replied for Blair and himself, the only surviving members of the cabinet, in his *Lincoln and Seward: Remarks upon the Memorial Address of Charles Francis Adams, on the Late William H. Seward* (New York: Sheldon and Co., 1874), iv–v. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., in his biography of his father, tells again the story of his father's sole official meeting with Lincoln, and indicates that his father's "dismay" at the interview never passed. The extent to which the casual Lincoln, perplexed with patronage, had offended the elder Adams was never forgotten, and Lincoln's offense was "distinctly apparent in the eulogy on Seward." See Charles Francis Adams, Jr., *Charles Francis Adams* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1900), 46.

8. Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 2 July 1861, *A Cycle of Adams Letters*, ed. Worthington Ford, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), 1:16.

9. "Affairs in England," *New York Times*, 12 August 1861, 2. Each article published in the *Times* carried a date of composition at the top of the story. In the text I have used that date to identify the moment at which Adams wrote each letter. In the footnotes, however, I reference each story by its date of publication.

10. "From London," *New York Times*, 15 July 1861, 2.

He was concerned that the press in England showed more than traces of corruption, that a systematic Southern effort to buy, and otherwise to influence, English coverage of American affairs was bearing fruit.[11] As an observer of the effects of popular opinion on government he was equally concerned about the effects of the anti-English American press. His cloak of concealment for once tattered, he urged moderation in the tone of such papers:

> I do trust that Americans will lay aside their tone of defiance towards England. Busied, as we loyal Americans always are, in this city, with efforts to help and strengthen our own party here, it is inconceivable how much this insolent reporting injures us. . . . [S]o long as the [London] *Times* can parade before the British nation the manner in which they are denounced by the American press, our work here is of the hardest.[12]

Himself a natural conspirator, he saw plots within plots: "It has been plain here, for some time past, that a systematic effort was being made to beat down our credit in the money market . . . the daily papers are beginning to teem with money articles, leaders, chance paragraphs, etc., etc., all tending to represent our credit as good for nothing, and thus to drive us out of the market, and leave us at the mercy of a few rich and powerful Jews."[13]

His strongest reaction was to the news of Bull Run. The defeat of Union forces brought him to despair, but his defense of his colleague William Russell's coverage of the battle was spirited and stubborn: "I cannot see the justice of the [American] anger that would punish him [Russell] for telling merely what he saw. If it was so—and his [Russell's] account bears all the marks of truth—we ought rather to own up fairly, and to see that such a disgrace never happens again.[14] To this theme Adams returned in September, insisting that Russell's "truth is undisputed. It is his business to be truthful. . . . [O]ur newspaper attacks on him do us infinite harm here, for every candid man cannot but take his side."[15] To his brother Charles he had written about the "mortification" he felt after Bull Run: "My determination to come home is only increased by this disgrace. I cannot stay here now to stand the taunts of every one without being able to say a word in defence."[16] And Adams, in one moment pleading with his brother to get him a commission and in the next laughing at Russell's account of the disgrace of the Union army, realized that Russell was essentially pro-Union—a judgment surer than Stanton's, who later denied Russell credentials.[17]

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11. "England And America," *New York Times*, 19 December 1861, 2.
12. "From London," *New York Times*, 26 September 1861, 2.
13. "From London," *New York Times*, 24 August 1861, 1.
14. "From London," *New York Times*, 24 August 1861, 1.
15. "From London," *New York Times*, 26 September 1861, 2.
16. Henry Adams, postscript dated 26 August 1861, *Adams Letters*, 1:27.
17. *Adams Letters*, 1:27–28. See Donaldson Jordan and Edwin Pratt, *Europe and the Civil War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), 81.

If, in the course of his letters to the *Times*, Adams often sounded more like an irritable press secretary representing the affairs of a beleaguered client than a reporter, his situation at his father's legation was much like that of the press secretary. A great part of the original motivation for his London letters was to defend the Adams policies, and the Adamses along with the policies. Thus the senior Charles Francis Adams's successful speech to London's commercial establishment at the Lord Mayor's invitation was featured in Private Secretary Adams's space in the *Times*. The American minister, his exultant son announced, had firmly replied to the hostility of the British, impressing "his audience and the people at large with confidence and good will towards him personally." Only the comments of the London *Times*, Henry Adams noted, soured the minister's triumph.[18]

His own letters were a fortnightly summary, wholly personal and remarkable for their range. The aloof and hostile English character discouraged him, and he was lonely. Upon his shoulders it must have seemed to rain disaster, whether Bull Run, *Nashville*, or the *Trent*, each the prelude to a cold fresh blast of British anger. Increasingly his attention turned to the sea, a far more congenial subject for a Boston Adams than the vagaries of a hostile press, foreign or domestic. The armies of the government his father represented had failed to prevent at least *de facto* Southern independence. Only the navy and its blockade seemed to offer hope for the future—but here too lay trouble for the Adams mission, as vital British interests were threatened by a successful blockade.

The first naval question that required the urgent attention of the Adamses, diplomat and reporter, was the status of Confederate privateers. A privateer was either a belligerent or, if not a belligerent, simply a pirate. While the Confederacy had no fleet at hand with which to make its threat of privateering good, such ships could, and would, be built. Henry Adams felt, then and later, that the English government dealt dishonestly with his father on this issue, and he recalled later in *The Education of Henry Adams* that, in the early summer of 1861, "the British government had done no act that had impressed him [Charles Francis Adams] as honest or straightforward." The minister and his son were, then, much relieved when British ports were closed to privateers.[19] With satisfaction Henry Adams announced to his *Times* readers that the closure "knock[ed] the plan of privateering directly on the head . . . there seems at last to be some hope that this piece of barbarism [privateering] will be quickly laid on the shelves of history forever."[20]

If the privateer was first among the dangers of the failure to ring the Confederacy with ships, other dangers for the Adams mission

18. "Important from England," *New York Times*, 30 November 1861, 2.
19. "The Declaration of Paris, 1861," in *The Great Secession Winter of 1860–61 and Other Essays*, ed. George Hochfield (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1963), 375.
20. "American Topics in England," *New York Times*, 21 June 1861, 2.

lurked as well in the blockade's success. The policy of the Union was to deny the sale of Southern cotton abroad, starving the Confederacy of foreign exchange. But the country suffering most by the success of the blockade was England, its mills and millhands idle. As England, and France, suffered without cotton, the Union's policy prospered—unless the suffering in Europe finally were to become so great that the British used their navy to break the blockade. Before Bull Run Adams, then sure that English sentiment was solidly pro-Union, was confident that the English would suffer this hardship willingly: "Between now and mid-winter, the stock of cotton on hand must be exhausted, mills must discharge hands and work on short time. I do not believe that there will be more than a sharp temporary pressure here, for the British nation."[21] Jaunty before Bull Run, he expected a short war: "[B]y next Spring a portion of our cotton will probably find its way over here, even if we are not by that time in possession of the whole supply. . . . [I]t seems likely that the shock of our civil war will be considerably softened by the time it reaches these shores, and if so, we may dismiss all fears of English interference with our blockade."[22]

But Bull Run altered all the prospects for a short war, and his once-optimistic view of Union prospects darkened. In the fall of 1861 the British cabinet discussed recognition of the Confederacy on the basis of the cotton crisis. Henry Adams's frail remaining hope for continued British neutrality became simply a matter of timing.[23] Cotton could be grown elsewhere in the vast British dominions, he suggested feebly on 31 August, and surely the English would prefer waiting for an imperial cotton crop to war with the Union.[24]

Adams knew, however, that the British need for American grain was at least as great as the need for cotton. The United States had supplied, in 1860, more than a third of Britain's wheat, and upon this thread hung cotton diplomacy.[25] But the state of industrial England without cotton, he conceded, was grim: "The factories of Sheffield are no longer a support, but a weight to the country. The looms of Manchester furnish already only a meager support to the swarms of their dependents, and are likely before long to furnish none at all. The cry of famine has already made itself heard in Ireland."[26]

The successes of blockade-runners embarrassed those who, like the American minister to England, found convenient at least the appearance of a tight blockade of the Confederacy. In his 24 August letter Adams had referred to "rumors"—often his phrase

21. "From London," *New York Times*, 2 August 1861, 2.
22. "From London," *New York Times*, 2 August 1861, 2.
23. Norman Ferris, *Desperate Diplomacy* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 129.
24. "From London," *New York Times*, 26 September 1861, 2.
25. Ferris, *Desperate Diplomacy*, 140.
26. "From London," *New York Times*, 28 October 1861, 2.

to mask information from the legation—of the safe passage of the *Bermuda* with a cargo of arms and ammunition for the Confederacy.[27] By 19 October he knew of the *Bermuda*'s safe arrival in Savannah. Her cargo of arms secure in Southern hands, the *Bermuda* then took aboard a full cargo of cotton, returning safely to England.[28] This was the Union nightmare full-blown, the trade of arms for cotton. The spectacular round-trip voyage of the *Bermuda* was a stark, vivid demonstration of the porosity of the Union blockade. And the success of the *Bermuda* was followed by the sailing of *Finigal* with a large cargo of munitions for the Confederacy, the largest military cargo of the war.[29]

These Confederate successes made Adams even more morose than he usually was in the gloomy period after Bull Run, and his sole satisfaction lay in the warnings he had given. "I recollect that as early as the 24th of August, I mentioned the warning here that such a vessel [as the *Bermuda*] had sailed, and that our authorities knew of it"—as indeed he, an "authority" himself by day, knew very well.[30] But he was angry and disappointed that such warnings went unheeded, suggesting to his readers that the navy must have known even earlier than his *Times* warning of 24 August of the *Bermuda*'s sailing from Liverpool. And the success of the *Bermuda* was, he knew, even more important as propaganda than as material resupply: "[S]urely and steadily popular opinion is forming [in England] against us; our allies are becoming silent, and our enemies more bitter."[31]

This broad, and very practical, education in naval affairs, which had come very quickly to dominate the business of the legation, was to be Henry Adams's background for reporting the controversy that followed an American officer's removal of two Confederate diplomats, Mason and Slidell, from the British ship *Trent*. The Adamses, like the American government itself, knew nothing of the diplomats' sailing on the *Trent* nor of their capture, though Minister Adams had earlier in November explained the lurking of the American warship *James Adger* in British waters as an earlier effort to capture Mason and Slidell from the Confederate *Nashville*, on which it was thought they had sailed. An effort to capture Mason and Slidell had been "rumored" in London, Henry Adams had earlier told his *Times* readers, and he warned piously that Southerners "manufacture news," that "one has to be perpetually on one's guard against the miserable, intriguing spirit of these [Southern] fellows, who are at the bottom of every

27. "From London," *New York Times*, 26 September 1961, 5.
28. "Secession Intrigues in England," *New York Times*, 2 November 1861, 2. Glicksberg was first to point this out. See Glicksberg, "Henry Adams," 445.
29. Frank Merli, *Great Britain and the Confederate Navy, 1861–5* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1970), 240.
30. "Secession Intrigues in England," *New York Times*, 2 November 1861, 2.
31. "The Attitude of England," *New York Times*, 18 November 1861, 2.

contemptible plot."[32] Suddenly the "rumor" was true, and the capture of the Confederate diplomats had become the center of a great crisis.

The news of Captain Wilkes's taking of Mason and Slidell did not reach England until 27 November, and it burst upon the government, and the legation, like a bomb. Henry Adams, acutely aware of diplomatic proprieties, referred to the removal of Mason and Slidell as "a violent step" and as "an insult to the British flag." The English press, Adams reported, was for war, and a popular remedy was to send Minister Adams packing.[33]

By mid-December there were visible British preparations for war: "There is no sign of slackening energy at the dockyards," Adams wrote on 14 December: "Troops are being concentrated; all available steamers are being taken up for transport service; immense supplies and stores are being shipped; vessels-of-war are fitting out as fast as means will allow; business is at a standstill."[34] War, it seemed to Henry Adams, would be the sure result of failing to release the Confederate ministers. The United States's decision to free Mason and Slidell was taken in a meeting of the Lincoln cabinet on Christmas Day 1861, and was not known in England until 8 January 1862. The compelling rationale for the release of the two Confederate diplomats was provided Seward, the principal advocate of their release, by those who, like Charles Francis Adams, reminded the secretary of the American position favoring freedom of the seas in the Anglo-American discussions of 1804. What Captain Wilkes had done, the taking of citizens from a neutral vessel, was precisely what the British had claimed as a right, and what the United States had opposed, before the War of 1812.[35] Henry Adams urged his father's point on his readers in the *Times*. "The surrender of the prisoners [Mason and Slidell] would place America . . . in harmony with her own record," Adams wrote at the height of the crisis. "Our own principles are wholly contrary to their retention." Yet Adams found English intransigence nearly as much at fault as Captain Wilkes, the English character "phlegmatic and dogmatic . . . sullen, dogged and unsocial . . . Ajax raving about the lost armor he has suffered, stupid, brutal Ajax, self-confident and deaf."[36]

On 21 December Adams indicated that Anglo-American affairs had improved. The occasion for this thaw was, he announced, that "Mr. [Charles Francis] Adams has lately, in an interview with Lord Palmerston, officially declared the act of Capt. Wilkes to be unauthorized." Optimistic again, confident of pro-Union sentiment in England as he had not been since before Bull Run, he insisted

32. "Important from England," *New York Times*, 30 November 1861, 2.
33. "England and America," *New York Times*, 19 December 1861, 2.
34. "The Anglo-American Issue," *New York Times*, 30 December 1861, 1.
35. Norman Ferris, *The Trent Affair* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 185–92.
36. "The War Panic in England," *New York Times*, 25 December 1861, 1–2.

to his readers, his dispatch written just four days before the Lincoln administration decided finally to release Mason and Slidell, that "it is no longer true that a majority of the [British] nation wishes war."[37]

On 28 December he wrote to the *Times* that "our great difficulty all along has been the belief that our government wanted a foreign war."[38] By 4 January, the crisis by now familiar, he was brisk and argumentative again: "The surrender of Mason and Slidell seems a matter about which more argument is mere waste of words. They ought not only to be surrendered, but surrendered cordially and as a part and result of all former American policy."[39] To complete this triumph it remained only, he wrote in the same latter, for the American government to stand on "firm, anti-slavery ground."[40]

The crisis that resulted from the taking of Mason and Slidell from the *Trent* allowed Adams to create in his letters a skillful mix of official information, Adams policy, and flattery of Seward.[41] His policy was the swift release of Captain Wilkes's prisoners, a policy the senior Adams urged on Seward even as his son promoted it in the *Times*. He was able to give his readers valuable glimpses of the Lincoln government's debate over the proper course and objectives of American policy regarding England, and his sense of the ebb and flow of the crisis, and the consensus forming around his father's position, was increasingly sure.

Adams had come to sympathize with an English group very different from the members of the English establishment among whom his work for his father took him in London:

> I have at last met a class of people who seem to sympathize with our troubles, and to be as thoroughly with us as the warmest Unionist could wish. Ordinary travelers in England see very little of [these] people, and that little mostly in commercial circles. . . . [They] form almost a different race, with ideas and principles widely distinct from those of the governing classes. These are the dissenters . . . the friends of radicalism.[42]

These people, so different from his other London acquaintances, were zealots, and they reflected the iron-hard adherence to principle so congenial to the Adams tradition. And they hated slavery:

> They say that there can be no safety for the Union as long as Slavery exists. The argument is true if any argument can be, and therefore all were rejoiced when FREMONT's proclamation came. But . . . since this measure was modified into insignificance, there has been great disgust felt on this account . . . they [the

37. "Important from London," *New York Times*, 4 January 1862.
38. "The Suspense in England," *New York Times*, 11 January 1862, 2.
39. "The Affair of the *Trent*," *New York Times*, 21 January 1862, 2.
40. "The Affair of the *Trent*," *New York Times*, 21 January 1862, 2.
41. "The Affair of the *Trent*," *New York Times*, 21 January 1862, 2.
42. "From Glasgow," *New York Times*, 20 October 1861, 2.

> dissenters] feel extreme astonishment that the President, who (they say) had not hesitated to overstep the limitations of the Constitution in almost every measure he has ever taken, should put up this plea now when a great moral principle is at stake. They declare that this is trifling with edged tools, and that the hand which is once put to the plow cannot be taken away again. They assert, too, that this is to jest away the sympathies of mankind.[43]

His irritation at the English press provoked him to another sympathy while in London. Irritated by the London *Times*'s coverage of a mason's strike for a nine-hour day, he wrote for his own paper that "knowing how badly the lower classes are situated here, and how common it is for capitalists to grind them down, one's first sensation is sympathy for them, and good will towards them . . . the objectives of the present strike do not seem to be extravagant nor their actions violent or illegal. The great problem of the present day is how to improve the condition of these classes."[44]

In January 1862 he was revealed, not as the author of the *Times* letters but of one to a Boston paper, a comparison of manners in London and Manchester unfavorable to the manners of the capital. He was mocked in the London *Times*, and, frightened by his notoriety, he gave up the writing of newspaper letters altogether. The most important effect of this humiliation was on Adams himself: "The lasting fear of a second such humiliation helped him toward the less exposed, more reflective pursuit of politics through historical and philosophical study."[45]

There would be no more Adams letters from London, he wrote Henry Raymond. For Raymond, Adams summarized events and trends in England as he saw them after the *Trent* matter had ended. He warned of Anglo-French maneuvers to break the Union blockade, currently thwarted only by Seward's "brilliant ability." Of Southern agitation Adams also warned, noting, however, that "everyone knows that agitation almost always gets its end in time." He hoped, he wrote Raymond, that his letters had been useful, regretting only that he had been "unable to speak as openly as I could have wished." His letter ends with a judgment of England and the English expressive of the loneliness of his first year in London: "Socially the position of Americans is not as pleasant as it might be. There is a cool ignorance and dogmatism about the people that is hard to bear, but I hope to see a spoke put in their wheel some day yet."[46]

43. "From Glasgow," *New York Times*, 20 October 1861, 2.
44. "Affairs in England," *New York Times*, 12 August 1861, 2.
45. J. C. Levenson, ed., in *Letters of Henry Adams* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1982), 235.
46. The letter of resignation from Adams to Raymond is printed in full in Joseph Barome, "Henry Adams Silenced by the Cotton Famine," *New England Quarterly* 33 (June 1948): 237.

Henry Adams's 1861–62 letters to the *New York Times* are, then, a record of the international impact of the Civil War's first phase by an observer well enough placed to make sense of what he saw. Adams was the epitome of the highly placed source. "All that I know," he wrote his brother Charles, "comes from my position, and without it I were nothing."[47] He related the many strands of information which came to him to his central theme, the question of British intervention. The letters are also a record, if a very flattering one, of Charles Francis Adams's first, and most difficult, year in England, and of what his son and secretary felt were his few but important triumphs, whether prevailing in the matter of the *Trent* or with his audience at the Lord Mayor's dinner.

The letters were crucial in the formation of Henry Adams the mature reporter, the analyst of public affairs who became after the war "the ranking censor of Congress . . . [who] might have become a power in the press."[48] As fierce a booster of the Union as of the Adamses, he wrote vivid prose that forcefully urged his points. Moody, he was sent into mingled panic and depression by Union reverses, but he was also capable of a serene patriotic faith. Above all he disliked England and the English, and his impatience with the ruling class impelled him to very unAdamslike sympathies. Important as a records of events and authorial moods, the Adams letters to the *Times* were kaleidoscopic, with as many subjects as their author had purposes. They illustrate the range and variety possible in the personal correspondence of the day, but their value to contemporary readers was sharply limited by the contrivances of their writing. Adams's need to deceive was simply greater than his interest in his readers' enlightenment, and his fixed loyalty to his father and to Seward transcended any more temporary bonds with readers or with Raymond. If the test of all journalism is the essential integrity of the relationship between reader and writer, the Adams letters to the *Times* were very bad journalism indeed, the product of contradictory purposes seriously mixed.

The letters are deeply partisan, informed by personal loyalties and party ties. These characteristics, at once their defect as journalism and their strength as polemic, are the source of much of their interest now. The Adamses left America before the Civil War took shape, before death and new freedom gave it substance and meaning. Henry Adams was politically timid, as perhaps only those who have high public office to lose rather than to win can be, and apart from slavery he advocated the continuation of things as they had been before the war. The great significance of Henry Adams's letters to the *New York Times* is the remarkable degree to which they reflect and preserve the issues of the Civil War as they were just before the war transformed them.

Once in England, time and the increasing velocity of the war

47. Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams, 7 September 1861, *Letters of Adams*, 250.
48. Samuels, *Young Adams*, 206.

continued to pass Adams by, which heightened the peculiar timidity of his letters as they touch on public policy. To Henry Adams political life was made up of personal loyalties, the ties up and down the greasy stairsteps of power so important to a young man whose father, with time and luck, might yet be president himself, and whose own ambitions, if unformed, were great. His sense of politics as a clash over principle, a struggle fundamentally moral, was diminished by personal interests, and his later significant political thought was the product of his finally ceasing to care about traditional political power.

His letters to the *Times* are a documentation of the middle way in American politics written when the middle way was gone, when moderates and moderation had become casualties of social revolution. The Adams view of American life reflected in the *Times* letters was as internationalist as it was timid, a view that looked from Quincy to Europe rather than to either the American South or West.

Lonely, unsure of whether he ought to fight or continue to watch the war from far away, he was deeply aware that those who, like himself, were gone from America in its crisis were, and would always be, isolated from the shaping experience of their generation. He summed up his own, very personal reaction to his first half-year in London when, in *The Education of Henry Adams*, he described the Trent crisis as a time at which "one lived, but was merely flayed alive."[49]

49. Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, ed. D.W. Brogan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 122.

TOUGH TALK AND BAD NEWS
Satire and the *New York Herald*, 1835–1860

Gary L. Whitby

HISTORY HAS NOT BEEN especially kind to James Gordon Bennett, Sr. Today, although he is given credit for innovations in news and for the development of an excellent business page, Bennett is not regarded nearly so highly as his arch-competitor Horace Greeley—this despite the fact that Bennett was already a veteran penny press editor by the time Greeley opened the doors of the *Tribune* in April 1841.

Journalism historians have been at a particular loss to explain Bennett's sometimes tough/sometimes bawdy language and his preference for lurid news. Edwin Emery speaks of Bennett's use of "sensational material."[1] Michael Schudson writes that "the *Herald* was declared off-limits to self-respecting men and women."[2] Robert Jones has noted claims against Bennett of "blasphemy, indecency, lying and libel."[3] Frank Luther Mott has written of the "reckless" character of the *Herald* and its "scandalous" treatment of news material.[4] And Sidney Kobre notes that Bennett hurled at his penny press rivals such terms as "blockheads" and "garbage of society."[5]

Although historians are unanimous in relating this side of Bennett's character and style, they are not clear as to what prompted it.[6] The general explanation offered here is that it was a necessary

1. Edwin and Michael Emery, *The Press and America*, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), 123.
2. Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic, 1978), 55.
3. Robert W. Jones, *Journalism in the United States* (New York: Dutton, 1947), 246.
4. Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), 235.
5. Sidney Kobre, *Development of American Journalism* (Dubuque, Iowa: Brown, 1969), 234.
6. The most recent critical study of Bennett is James L. Crouthamel, *Bennett's* New York Herald *and the Rise of the Popular Press* (New York: Syracuse

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part of Bennett's satiric strategy of reduction and ridicule. Given that satire is a literary form, did Bennett think of his role as a literary one? If so, why and to what purpose? Is it possible that the editor, roundly condemned for improper and anti-social language during his career, ironically intended this as a means of social reform? These are some of the questions this study will attempt to answer in context with a consideration of satire as Bennett's primary journalistic method and overall reaction to the culture of his day.

Readers of *American Journalism* are certainly aware of the meaning of satire, but perhaps a working definition would be useful at this point. Satire is a "manner which blends a critical attitude with humor and wit for the purpose of improving human institutions or humanity."[7] Satirists use "invective, sarcasm, irony, mockery, raillery, exaggeration, and understatement" to achieve their aims.[8] The satirist often poses as "a plain honest man, wishing harm to no upright person, but appalled at the evil he sees about him and forced by his conscience . . . to write."[9] The methods of satire may seem negative, but their appeal—to "virtue," "rational behavior," and, generally, the preservation of the normatively virtuous part of the status quo—is positive.[10] According to Robert C. Elliott, the role of satire in society has long been recognized. Although satirists usually regard themselves as social reformers, social leaders sometimes regard them as outcasts. Plato's Laws imposed strong punishment for anyone who composed or performed a satire against someone else.[11] The early Greek satirist Archilochus (seventh century B.C.) was said to have written so powerful a satire against the family of his enemy Lycambes that Lycambes and his daughters committed suicide.[12] Archilochus's satiric poetry was so socially powerful that it was banned from Sparta.[13] Old Irish law sanctioned "good" satire, that which was intended to rectify social

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University Press, 1989). Like Bennett scholars before him, Crouthamel notes that Bennett's editorials were "notorious for their rhetorical extremism—strident, vituperative,and emotional." However, Crouthamel gives no explanation of Bennett's harsh language, beyond the obvious fact that "Bennett's remarkable success came because he created an attractive and useful product for which there was a widespread but untapped demand." Also, while claiming that no good, scholarly study of Bennett currently exists, Crouthamel at once notes the difficulties of studying Bennett (only a handful of letters exist; the papers themselves are too many to read; and, yet, no sampling technique is really a substitute for a full reading) and fails to explain his own method. Crouthamel's book is, nonetheless, interesting and well researched and written.

7. Hugh Holman and William Harmon, *A Handbook to Literature*, 5th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1986), 447.
8. See *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Alex Preminger (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), 738.
9. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry*, 738.
10. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry*, 738.
11. See Robert C. Elliott, *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), 260.
12. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry*, 738.
13. Elliott, *Power of Satire*, 261

wrongs, and censured "bad" satire, that which was intended to harm someone.[14]

The satirist claims to be "a true conservative" of the best interests of society and appeals to "reason" as the best way of preserving those interests. She or he is the "preserver of tradition, the true tradition from which there has been a grievous falling away."[15] Satirists are, however, often suspect of being something other than mere conservatives. Owing to their methods, which involve attacking an evil institution or a person inflated or protected by that institution, satirists may seem at times to be attempting to liberalize society and destroy good morals.[16] Part of the satirist's strategy for deflating fools and foolish institutions is *reduction*. Those satirized may be reduced to the level of animals, and their bestial nature dwelt on at length and characterized in scatological terms.[17]

Because satire sometimes relies heavily on invective[18] as a tool against victims, the satirist's intentions may be misunderstood by society at large. Satire may result in emotional pain for the victim, and, although the satirist may claim to be trying to bring about reform, this may not be clear. The sociologist Frederick E. Lumley writes that until "hundreds of testimonies of satire's effectiveness" can be collected, "the proposition that [it] is an effective instrument of social control must be left in the air."[19]

Satire is at its best when warring against intrusions into the realm of received social mores and customs that nonetheless do not warrant complete adherence. Largely because of this, satire enjoyed great success in the Restoration Age in England and throughout the neoclassic period,[20] stretching to the end of the eighteenth century—a time of growth for British and American newspapers.

Bennett's values were essentially neoclassic ones. He found himself at odds with the prevailing romantic spirit of his day and chose to satirize its manners and goals as well as its foibles.[21] As

14. Elliott, *Power of Satire*, 260.
15. Elliott, *Power of Satire*, 266.
16. Elliott, *Power of Satire*, 261.
17. I have in mind here Gulliver's journey to the land of the Yahoos in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.
18. See Elliott, *Power of Satire*, 3–14, 263–64, 270–71.
19. Frederick E. Lumley, *Means of Social Control* (New York: Harper and Sons, 1925), 251–55, cited by Elliott, *Power of Satire*, 271.
20. See *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry*, 739. Also see Holman and Harmon, *Handbook to Literature*, 329, for a good discussion of neoclassicism.
21. Romanticism is really the received tradition in America. See Robert E. Spiller, "Critical Standards in the American Romantic Movement," *College English* 8 (April1947): 344. This has been recognized by most of the scholars dealing with romanticism. See, for example, Russel Blaine Nye, *Society and Culture in America, 1830–1860* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 73. Neoclassicism was never the literary force in this country that it was in Europe, and in its short duration it quickly gave way to the romantic spirit; however, neoclassicism did have a lasting impact on the American newspaper—as we can see in the case of BenjaminFranklin as well as Bennett—given that much

noted earlier, several studies of Bennett mention his humor and wit.[22] The editor himself was more specific, referring to his own

of its philosophy was incorporated into the Constitution, some of which touched on press freedom.

In other ways American romanticism was quite typical of romanticism abroad: it stressed the emotions, developed a new theory of nature, idealized the primitive and the rural, was oftentimes quite mystical in character, relied on the unrestrained imagination, and stressed individualism, human rights, democracy, and the doctrine of progress.

For a more recent and detailed discussion of romanticism and the American Renaissance, see the following critical studies: *The American Renaissance Reconsidered*, ed. Walter Benn Michaels and Donald E. Pease (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), is a series of essays on prominent authors of the American romantic period. David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance* (New York: Knopf, 1988), looks at a number of minor writers and period stereotypes as these influenced the more prominent writers. Leon Chai, *The Romantic Foundations of the American Renaissance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987), considers not only romantic literature but also its relation to philosophy, theology, the natural sciences, and historiography and the visual arts. Jane Tompkins, *The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), is a cultural study that attempts to escape from the typical consideration of great figures or great themes and view literature as a series of attempts to "redefine the social order." In so doing, Tompkins considers a number of works popular in their day but not highly regarded as yet in this century. Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Office of* The Scarlet Letter (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), deals with what he calls "process and telos" in Hawthorne's great novel. Using *The Scarlet Letter* as a touchpoint, he focuses on "conflict and change" that gives rise to "a triumph of the American ideology"—by which he means the development of liberalism in the "organic development from 'classical' to 'marketplace' liberalism."

22. See B. A. Daydrick, "Journalism and Humor," *Chautauquan* 66 (March 1912): 28–53, and Charles F. Wingate, *Views and Interviews on Journalism* (New York: Patterson, 1875), 281. Wingate states that Bennett was "essentially skeptical," notes the editor's attempts at the "destruction of an adversary," and writes that "the greatest magnate was no more to him than any common man, and he castigated the one just as readily as the other." Also, Richard O'Connor, in his *The Scandalous Mr. Bennett* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 21, 77, mentions the "invective" and "mocking tone" of much of the *Herald*. Don Carlos Seitz, in his *The James Gordon Bennetts—Father and Son, Proprietors of the* New York Herald (New York: Beekman, 1974), 37, 73, notes Bennett's "biting wit" and his tendency toward "knocking nonsense out of the human mind."

Finally, Oliver Carlson, in his *The Man Who Made News, James Gordon Bennett* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942), speaks of the "bitter invective and telling sarcasm of Bennett's pen" and writes that the *Herald* "held up to ridicule and scorn not only its political and editorial adversaries but everyone, regardless of place or position, whose name was well known" (131). "Bluebloods and bankers, actors and abolitionists, clergy and cloister, demi-mondes and demagogues, politicians, quacks, reformers, speculators, thieves, and union organizers—all were publicly impaled in the columns of the *Herald*. No person, no sentiment, no subject was too sacred to be spared. Bennett, having discovered that people were willing to buy his paper for its sensationalism, determined to give the public full measure of what it craved" (168).

What Carlson here calls "sensationalism" was certainly present in the *Herald*; however, purely sensational content in that paper had more to do with Bennett's practice of getting sex into his news stories, especially lurid sex. The fact that a number of public figures were regularly "publicly impaled in the columns of the *Herald*" had more to do with something other than sensationalism; it had to do with Bennett's satire.

style as "satirical."[23] In 1850, arguing that traditional literary forms were outmoded, Bennett claimed the newspaper to be the major new literary form of the age.[24] And like the traditional satirist, he thought of himself as being devoted to the correcting of social wrongs.[25]

Bennett's absurd comparison of himself with Homer and Shakespeare may be taken as an instance of the arrant braggadocio often associated with the wit and self-importance of the satirist.[26] Bennett's sensibility was likely formed as much by his religious upbringing as by any exposure to great literature.[27] Perhaps the two taken together—his internalization, at an early age, of Biblical standards of morality plus his image of himself as a *litterateur* out to correct social mores—influenced him most in his views on the shortcomings and failures of New York society. In any case, quite apart from the way we view Bennett today, as anything but a social reformer, he clearly saw himself as a crusading literary man out to correct social wrongs—claiming, after the 1840s "moral war" against him, that his efforts to reform New York journalism had been greeted by a "snarling" recalcitrance "without parallel in literary history."[28]

The central tenet of the American romantic movement, which swirled around the *Herald* from 1835 to the outbreak of the Civil War, was a heart-felt emotionalism—one later laughed at by another newspaper satirist, Mark Twain. Bennett made fun of such emotionalism and played it down in the *Herald*. His early education included training in the classics; and in the *Herald*'s emphasis on balance, one of the primary traits of classicism, one

23. A few of Bennett's letters have been published—without notation as to source—in Seitz. In telling of his days as a Washington correspondent, Bennett wrote, "I changed the whole tone, temper, and style of Washington correspondence.... In the Library of Congress I spent much of my time, poring over Jefferson's collection of old pamphlets, which no one, before or since, has perhaps looked into. Sometimes I would take a peep at the new publications of the day, and among them I found the recent publication of Horace Walpole's famous letters and correspondence, written during the reign of George II, and describing, in witty and agreeable badinage, the intrigues, politics, incidents, and explosions of that singular court. I said to myself one day, 'Why not try a few letters on a similar plan from this city, to be published in New York describing, eulogizing or satirizing the court of John Q. Adams?' I did so. All the political, gay, fashionable, witty, beautiful characters that appeared in Washington during that winter, were sketched off at random, without being personal or offensive to any of the parties." Seitz, *The James Gordon Bennetts*, 22–23.

24. *New York Herald*, 15 November 1850, p. 2, col. 1, an editorial quoted in Seitz, *The James Gordon Bennetts*, 55.

25. See a Bennett editorial quoted in Seitz, *The James Gordon Bennetts*, 84. No original source given.

26. See a Bennett editorial cited in Seitz, *The James Gordon Bennetts*, 83–84. No original source given.

27. See a letter by Bennett about his religious upbringing, quoted in Carlson, *Man Who Made News*, 10. No original source given.

28. "Newspaper Enterprise—Controversy of the *Herald*'s Movements," *New York Herald*, 9 January 1843, p. 2, col. 1.

can see this influence at work.[29] In a March 1859 editorial dealing with politics, Bennett noted the disarray of the parties for the upcoming national presidential election and called for a "happy medium" between extremes.[30] The subtitle of this entry was "A Balance of Power."

The general thrust of Bennett's involvement in New York and national politics was indeed typically away from extremes and toward a balancing of the needs of one group and section against those of another. Central to this was his view of the role of the press, which he saw as a balance point in the midst of the forces of public opinion.[31] In an 1855 Fourth of July editorial on the growing national problem of sectionalism over slavery, Bennett seized the occasion to claim that those countries with a diversity of opinion were healthiest—and that some degree of tension between northerners and southerners should therefore be taken as an indication of national health.[32] Balance was used here as a central metaphor and depicted in the Romanesque arch with its tightly fitting stones. Consonant with the structural solidity and regularity of this image was Bennett's deistic idea that the universe was ordered so as to be open to human reason.[33] He viewed his newspaper in terms of a cosmic order, as a functioning part of "the machinery of the universe."[34]

Reflecting Bennett's concern with balance and order, the poetry in the *Herald*, during the paper's first few years, was a mix of neoclassic and romantic types, later giving way increasingly to the neoclassic and, especially, to satire. To anyone familiar with his style, it is apparent that Bennett wrote many of these poems. Judging from the variety—not the amount—of poetry published in the *Herald*, he was clearly aware of the strongly literary character of the age (the heyday of Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman) and was determined to satisfy the taste of a reading audience much interested in poetry.[35] The most characteristic kind

29. Holman and Harmon, *Handbook to Literature*, 90.

30. "The New Congress and the Next Presidency—The Third Party and Its Balance of Power," *New York Herald*, 24 March 1859, p. 4, cols. 2–3. Determining which editorials in the *Herald* were written by Bennett is a fairly easy matter. In contrast to Horace Greeley, who permitted several of his editors to write editorials for the *Tribune*, Bennett almost always wrote his own editorials. His pungent style is easily recognizable and distinguishable from that of surrounding stories on a page. The sampling technique for this study involved a "structured week" approach, in which one issue per two weeks was read, from the beginning of the *Herald* in 1835 to the outbreak of the Civil War in May 1861.

31. See "Balance" in Seitz, *The James Gordon Bennetts*, 71.

32. "The Fourth," *New York Herald*, 4 July 1855, p. 4, col. 3.

33. For a working definition of deism, see C. Hugh Holman, *Handbook to Literature*, 4th ed., 328. The present study relies largely on Holman.

34. *New York Herald*, 22 July 1836, p. 2, col. 1. "I shall not be satisfied till... my double cylinder shall work night and day, without ceasing, like the machinery of the universe, the planets, stars, tides, winds, &c, &c."

35. This study, however, found relatively little poetry in the *Herald*. If the widespread presence of poetry can be taken as one indicator of the extent of

of poem published in the *Herald* was verse satire. This took, and often parodied, a variety of standard poetic forms, including the sonnet and the ballad, two forms especially liked by romantic writers.[36] Not all of these satirical verse entries were gentle. Indeed, a number of them were biting and caustic, showing Bennett to be capable of handling Juvenalian as well as Horatian satire.[37]

These poems often followed, sometimes months later, a scathing editorial, as a sort of kicker. For example, in September 1836, a Bennett editorial compared "penny literature with loafer literature," complaining that New York had produced a number of loafing "dandies" who pretended to be interested in literature but whose interest and efforts were affectations. They were, Bennett wrote, "without solidity, or force of mind. They dash forward, dazzle a few milliners, but are without any permanency of action or endurance of mind, or real knowledge of human nature."[38] Later, both poetic "loaferism" and laziness in general were satirized in verse in the *Herald*.[39] Bennett made harsh fun of other excesses as well, including phrenology.[40] One of his most biting verse satires, titled "Man Is but a Worm," reduced human beings to the lowest of estates without granting them any worth at all.[41]

The *Herald* aimed some of its nastiest satire at romantic religion.[42] A poem published in January 1843 attacked the Reverend

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emotionalism in a penny paper, the relative absence of poetry in the *Herald* may itself indicate Bennett's striving for balance. Bennett did not, moreover, often use the poem either as a form of advertisement or as a means of emotionally charging the social issues of the day. For examples of romantic poems, see "Stanzas," *New York Herald*, 31 August 1835, p. 1, col. 3; "Consecrated Tears," *New York Herald*, 1 September 1835, p. 1, col. 3; "The First Leaf of Spring" and "A New Ballad," *New York Herald*, 2 September 1835, p. 1, col. 3. Mingled with poems like these were poems with neoclassic themes, subjects, and characters. An early poem, "Canzonet," contained a number of classical references, especially to Apollo and Cynthia. See *New York Herald*, 12 September 1835. Another, an elegiac sonnet on the death of the New York poetess Mrs. Hemans, spoke of the muse and Mount Helicon, as well as other classical topics: "Sonnet," *New York Herald*, 15 July 1836, p. 4, col. 1. Another, "To the Dark-Eyed Juno," *New York Herald*, 17 August 1837, p. 4, col. 1, invoked the goddess, with classical restraint, to bless a lover's efforts.

36. "Serenade," *New York Herald*, 12 September 1835, p. 1, col. 3, an early ballad, parodied the dejected lover. An early sonnet, *New York Herald*, 7 January 1836, p. 1, col. 4, parodied the sonnet form. Also see "To 'Old Hays,'" *New York Herald*, 21 September 1835, p. 1, col. 3; "To the Writer of the 'Ballad,'" *New York Herald*, 25 September 1835, p. 1, col. 3; "A Light Article," *New York Herald*, 1 October 1835, p. 1, col. 4.

37. See Holman and Harmon, *Handbook to Literature*, 448, for a good working definition of these two broad types of satire.

38. "Penny Literature Versus Loafer Literature," *New York Herald*, 30 September 1836, p. 2, col. 2.

39. "Jeremy the Loafer," *New York Herald*, 4 July 1837, p. 4, col. 1.

40. "The Phrenologist," *New York Herald*, 5 October 1836, p. 3.

41. "Man Is but a Worm," *New York Herald*, 18 February 1836, p. 4, col. 1.

42. Cultural historian Russel Blaine Nye has written that romanticism, religion, and anti-slavery were closely connected in the nineteenth century. Evangelism, argues Nye, which "cut across sectarian lines" and manifested itself most clearly in the Congregational, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches,

David Hale, a New York Presbyterian minister, for his hatred of Catholics.[43] Another satirized that branch of evangelical religion which predicted an impending end of the world and judgment day. As a preface to the latter, titled "Prophet Miller in Motion," Bennett wrote, tongue deep in cheek, "This eminently holy man, and accurate calculator, prophet, astronomer, and second-advent saint, will arrive here on Saturday, to prepare for the great day of the Millenium on the 23d of April. He will lecture next Sunday, and prove his calculations by the golden rule of three."[44]

The satiric strategy in the first of these two poems was to reveal the meanness of Hale by way of showing his malice against one Bishop Hughes. Satiric irony was heavy: a "holy" man praying for the damnation of another and promising to sing, earnestly for once, "Glory to God" if God would grant the fiendish prayer. The satiric strategy of the second poem was also ironic; here, though, the irony was a little less savage. The terms *holy man, accurate calculator, Prophet, astronomer,* and *second-advent saint* might almost have been taken seriously except for the title, a broad jab at Miller, and except for the fact that it was apparently Miller himself who was the antecedent of the divine "He" of the poem's first line: "He sat upon his blazing throne." That is, Miller, by virtue of his megalomaniacal claim to know the date of the end of the world, had put himself on the very throne of God.

The *Herald* poet here made the cosmos respond dramatically to Miller's every whim, until heaven and hell were opened and, shrieking and sighing in an "awful" noise, mingled together. Both religious leaders were shown to be morally bankrupt, the first because of the intensity of his malice against Catholics, the second

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was also "powerfully reinforced by the parallel Romantic movement in philosophy and literature, which also stressed the role of the individual in finding truth and the validity of his or her inner convictions."

Nye argues that "Ralph Waldo Emerson's idea that man had connections through his mind and Nature with an Oversoul, and the camp meeting conversion's burst of inward joy were expressions of the same articles of Romantic belief," and that "revivalists and their followers tended to get mixed up with unsettling matters like abolitionism, women's rights, and prohibition."

He also notes that "evangelical Christianity, of course, was always missionary-minded; by Biblical injunction it was the duty of the saved to save others. The emphasis on the worthiness of man, implicit in the Romantic philosophy, reinforced the old Arminian doctrine of God's infinite love and mercy for all sinful men. If grace were extended by God to everyone, Kaffirs to Polynesians, then all men must be given an opportunity to accept it. 'Working among the heathen,' then, became a Christian duty." *Society and Culture,* 286–87, 292.

Echoing Nye, Stow Persons, in a chapter titled "Harriet Beecher Stowe and Romantic Christianity," relates the evangelical movement, as evinced in the Beechers, to the romantic movement and to the impact of the novel on slavery. *American Minds: A History of Ideas* (New York: Krieger, 1975), 227ff.

43. "The Earnest Prayer of Holy Davy, Made Devoutly to the Lord Every Morning, Noon and Evening," *New York Herald,* 21 January 1843, p. 2, col. 2.

44. "Prophet Miller in Motion," *New York Herald,* 26 January 1843, p. 2, col. 2.

for his credulity and megalomaniacal obsession with what he apparently took to be his own omniscience.

By 1837 the poem had lost much of the prominence it had enjoyed during the *Herald*'s first few years, a change perhaps owing to Bennett's increasing business success and involvement in New York politics. In 1835 and 1836 poems were commonly placed on the front page, usually in the middle column. However, by January 1836 poems were being placed regularly on page four, column one; and the *Herald*'s poetry, initially of two sorts, romantic and neoclassic, gradually gave way to the latter. This stressed balance and symmetry over the emotions.

In keeping with this emphasis, the *Herald* satirized in editorials any manifestation of a reliance on the emotions or feelings and argued for a cool rationality—except where it saw fit to attack whatever social wrong (which, for Bennett, included almost any form of social progress) it felt should be righted. In March 1851, for instance, Bennett compared a quiet "colored" convention in New York City with the fever of abolitionist gatherings:

> The orderly manner, too, in which those meetings have been hitherto conducted, presents a remarkable contrast to the riotous assemblages of the Women's Convention in New England, and of the Anti-Slavery Society held here last summer, when Lloyd Garrison & Co. indulged in such inflammatory, blasphemous, anti-Christian and treasonable language, as led to breaches of the peace and the breaking up of their meetings.[45]

Although Bennett objected to the impulsive character of the many movements of his day, he still featured their activities, often referring to their leaders—abolitionist leaders in particular—as "fanatical."[46] This response was typical of his indictment of all "isms," whether abolitionism, transcendentalism, or temperance. In a May 1860 satirical editorial about the abolitionist leader Gerrit Smith, who had been gravely ill but had recovered, Bennett, with a Horatian wink, wrote, "If we were to do away with men of his calibre the newspapers would become bankrupt in the way of sensations. They are to the press what melodramatic actors are to the stage—its refuge against dullness."[47]

The tendency of the *Herald* to satirize romantic religion was noted earlier in connection with the paper's verse satire. The *Herald* regularly aimed its satire at such religion from the editorial page as well. In an April 1859 editorial dealing with the disarray of national political parties, the *Herald*, castigating the emotionalism of both abolition and romantic religion, linked them together

45. "The Colored Convention and Its Objects," *New York Herald*, 31 March 1851, p. 2, col. 2.
46. "The Bootmakers of New England," *New York Herald*, 3 February 1860, p. 4, col. 5.
47. "Gerrit Smith Redivivus," *New York Herald*, 22 May 1860, p. 5, cols. 5–6.

as constituting a "republican synagogue."[48] In another editorial, also noting the relationship between abolition and the church, the *Herald* decried the "Degradation of the Pulpit" in its move into the arena of social reform.[49] Bennett here indicated the traditionalism of his religious views, arguing that the role of the church was to be something apart from what he considered to be the degraded, mundane estate of much of national politics.

In taking up such fevered and emotional political causes as abolition, the clergy had, Bennett argued, overbalanced themselves away from the collective "dignity of their office." He generally satirized the evangelical religious groups not only for what he considered their emotional approach but also for what he thought of as their silliness. In an October 1852 editorial titled "The New York Pious Press, in 'White Kerchiefs,'" Bennett referred to the Baptist newspaper, the *Recorder*, as "long-winded, and open to the shafts of ridicule, from its Puritan tone and frequently extravagant phraseology"; and to a Congregationalist paper, the *Independent*, as "filled with the disputes of Rev. Joel Parker and Henry Ward Beecher" (both staunch abolitionists), twitting them as rabble-rousers and as divines with a remarkable ability to "'distinguish and divide / A hair 'twixt south and southwest side.'"[50]

Bennett seems to have viewed nature in the neoclassical way, as constituting natural law, "order," and "decorum."[51] This perception could not but help condition how he regarded social issues.[52] Nature for him was the orderly machine set ticking by a

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48. "The Question of the Succession—The Divisions of the Opposition," *New York Herald*, 23 April 1859, p. 4, cols. 1–2.

49. "Degradation of the Pulpit," *New York Herald*, 28 January 1844, p. 2, col. 2.

50. "The New York Pious Press, in 'White Kerchiefs,'" *New York Herald*, 10 October 1852, p. 2, col. 2.

51. See Holman, *Handbook to Literature*, 4th ed., 293–94. For detailed information on the differences between Romanticism and Neoclassicism, see Rene Wellek, "The Concept of 'Romanticism' in Literary History," *Comparative Literature* 1 (Spring 1949): 150.

52. Seitz quotes Bennett in a passage (apparently from a letter: no documentation was provided) in which Bennett's deistic thought is suggested: "I had not reached the age of eighteen, before the light of nature—the intelligence of the age—the progress of truth and knowledge had broken to pieces all the ridiculous superstitions of the church of Rome, without affecting a single moral principle which I had received in the course of my early instruction."

The "light of nature" here appears to have been that natural reason which, the deist claimed, dwelt in the mind of "right-thinking" men. Bennett had been trained in the traditions of Christianity but claimed, as an independent rationalist, the right of interpreting scripture as he saw fit: "The Bible is before me. Have I not a right to read that book—to draw out from it religious opinions—and to create a belief and a church of my own?"

Bennett also insisted on his rights as an independent thinker: "I would not submit to bigotry, either Catholic or Protestant, even at that early age [eighteen]. I went to the sources of true religion, and drank of the pure stream, uncontaminated by priest or prelates, parson or minister; and as long as we have these sacred volumes [apparently, holy books and man's rational faculties] here below, defiance may alike be set to the bigots of Catholicity or

deistic God, not the eldritch and unpredictable nature of the romantics. He viewed society in similar terms. In October 1836 he wrote, "The whole frame of society is a *machine* of contradictory impulses and practical absurdities—who is to set it right?"[53] In July of that same year, he had written the editorial cited earlier, in which he compared the *Herald* to the "Machinery of the Universe."[54] And in March 1860, he spoke of "natural laws" (apparently social ones) that would prevent the planned joining of Brooklyn with New York.[55]

"Right reason" was the upshot of this view of nature. And with reason, not emotion, as his guide, Bennett viewed the organization of society in rigid terms. In a July 1858 editorial titled "The Women's Rights Convention—The Modern Worshippers of Nature," he castigated women's rights leaders not only for being, he claimed, licentious but also for wanting to change the established male/female roles in society, rebuking the women for trying to usurp control over, in his words, "siring and generating."[56] Likewise, in an 1846 editorial dealing with the activities of Kentucky's Cassius M. Clay, Bennett wrote that "in this State there is a convention about being convened, for the purpose of remodeling the Constitution, and particularly the laws relative to voting. It is proposed that the negro be hereafter placed on the same footing in regard to political rights as the white man, and [that we should] attempt to remove those insuperable barriers which nature has placed between them."[57] Bennett reviled the "attempt" as being unnatural. His neoclassicism here caused him to view the class divisions among social groups as having been ordered by natural law and, therefore, as being legitimate. The presence of what he considered to be "insuperable barriers" between whites and blacks unwittingly led him to a theory of human nature that could condone oppression and satirize those who fought against it.

In May 1855, in an editorial titled "Fanaticism," which dwelt on the emotional characteristics of the abolitionists, Bennett seemed to see no possible wrong in human institutions themselves, only in individual human beings.[58] Institutions, he seemed to suggest,

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of Protestantism. We care for neither. We are independent of all. Like Luther—like Paul, we go on our own hook." Seitz, *The James Gordon Bennetts*, 85–86.

These quotes, taken together, sound much like a textbook definition of deism: "The religion of those who believe in a God who rules the world by established laws but who do not believe in the divinity of Christ or the inspiration of the Bible; 'natural' religion, based on reason and a study of NATURE as opposed to 'revealed' religion." Holman and Harmon, *Handbook to Literature*, 136.

53. *New York Herald*, 13 October 1836, p. 2, col. 3.
54. *New York Herald*, 22 July 1836, p. 2, col. 1.
55. "Inconsistencies of Black Republican Legislation," *New York Herald*, 23 March 1860, p. 4, col. 4.
56. "The Women's Rights Convention—The Modern Worshippers of Nature," *New York Herald*, 10 July 1858, p. 4, cols. 3–4.
57. "Cassius M. Clay's Movements," *New York Herald*, 12 January 1846, p. 2, col. 2.
58. "Fanaticism," *New York Herald*, 2 May 1855, p. 4, col. 4.

were rightly constituted by natural law, and he saw no need to change them. He did not identify, therefore, with any movement that sought a new view of human nature; consequently, he rejected and satirized the ideas of transcendentalism, along with, as has been noted, other "isms" of the day.[59]

New England transcendentalism, a well-known quasi-religious romantic literary movement that included many famous religious leaders of the day, called forth Bennett's angry satiric voice on a number of occasions. Transcendentalists, following the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, argued the presence in human affairs of an "oversoul" (Emerson's term). This transcended human nature and human law; one knew its presence by way of "intuition" and "personal revelation."[60] Abolitionist leaders, many of whom were prominent transcendentalists, incorporated the idea of the oversoul into their argument that there was a "higher law" than the Constitution that could be relied on in addressing the absence of a Constitutional ban against slavery. For Bennett—who, despite his staunch individualism as an editor, prized received group values so long as they did not restrain him personally—the idea of a law higher than the Constitution was political heresy and outside the scope of natural law itself, given that the Constitution had been founded on principles of natural law.

Bennett mocked transcendentalism and other "isms" associated with the romantic movement, including abolitionism, as dreamy and objectionable social manifestations of what a reliance on "higher law" had already begun to bring about. He reviled the use of the phrase as a tactic by abolitionist leaders like William Lloyd Garrison for circumventing the rights of individual states in the slavery issue.[61]

In a November 1852 editorial aimed squarely at Horace Greeley and the *New York Tribune*, Bennett wrote about the defeat of the Whig party in the recent presidential election. Here he viewed the Constitution as an unchanging body of laws, as if it were for him the embodiment of his deistic principles. There could be no "higher law" than this, he suggested.[62] In a later editorial dealing with the

59. "Infidel Philosophy and 'Isms,'" *New York Herald*, 26 May 1852, p. 5, col. 5.

60. See Holman, *Handbook to Literature*, 4th ed., 449.

61. According to Nye, Garrison had argued that by permitting slavery the Constitution had violated basic principles of Christianity and humanitarianism and was therefore nullified as a document of national law. "On grounds of 'abstract morality—of obedience to higher law,' Garrison flatly refused to recognize the Constitution at all." "Friends of liberty and humanity," Garrison wrote, "must immediately withdraw from the compact of bloody and deceitful men, to cease striking hands with adulterers." A legal apologist for the Garrison organization wrote that "a 'higher law' than man-made constitutions must 'harmonize with the law of God or be set at naught by upright men.'" See Russel Blaine Nye, *William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1955), 141–42.

62. "Confessions of Sewardism—The Whig Party Defunct—What Next?" *New York Herald*, 9 November 1852, p. 4, cols. 1–2.

admitting of Minnesota and Oregon to the Union, Bennett gave his own version of the higher law. The editorial suggested two basic points of Bennett's thought: (1) that human nature was something static, something controlled by social/racial "climate"; and (2) that those who transgressed the law of the status quo ("nigger worshippers," "John Chinaman," "Southern fire-eating philosophers," who "are endeavoring to accomplish the work of extracting sunbeams from the cucumber," and "Mr. English") should be savagely satirized. Here also was displayed the editor's sense of balance at work: the editorial itself was rhetorically balanced so as to castigate extremists North and South; and Bennett's perception of the validity of an economic status quo based on the natural demands of socio-racial climate suggested a higher, cosmic balance in nature itself—the editor's own, if dark, version of the higher law.[63]

News stories at large in the *Herald* echoed its editor's satirical voice railing against American blacks. Images of blacks in early issues were almost entirely negative and satirized the primitive and brutal side of black life in New York City. Although some of these images were found in the "Police Court" section of the paper, where one might expect to see street language, they still showed surprisingly strong overtones of racial stereotyping. In one, a black prostitute was characterized as being "the thickest lipped, darkest skinned, strongest smelling" of two prostitutes who approached a sea captain and his friends.[64] In another, a man was accused of assaulting a black woman described as a "negro wench."[65] A subsequent story dealt with one "Mary Burns, a very ugly, filthy and ragged negro wench."[66] One told the story of a particularly savage fight among blacks.[67] Another, titled "The African Vocalists," satirized the allegedly primitive manners and appearances of a group of black New York musicians.[68]

Herald stories dealing indirectly with blacks either satirized them or characterized them in primitive terms, as in the following January 1840 story on abolition:

> Brother Slade [not otherwise identified], of Vermont, finished his abolition speech yesterday, and made the most of it. It was wool and ivory from beginning to end, and though it is out of the capitol, I can distinctly smell it now. It has the odor of a dead nigger on a dung heap in July. It will be packed up for the Vermont market in all good time, and will be pickled by Mr. Slade's

63. "Minnesota and Oregon and the Black Republicans," *New York Herald*, 11 May 1858, p. 6, cols. 3–4.
64. "Police," *New York Herald*, 13 January 1838, p. 2, col. 2.
65. "Court of General Sessions," *New York Herald*, 10 November 1838, p. 3, col. 1.
66. "Police Office," *New York Herald*, 16 August 1839, p. 4, col. 5.
67. *New York Herald*, 31 October 1835, p. 2, col. 4.
68. "The African Vocalists," *New York Herald*, 19 April 1843, p. 2, col. 3.

> brothers and sisters in the Lord, in the African conventicle.[69]

The savage Juvenalian invective here was typical of other *Herald* news stories about blacks. Bennett regularly referred to blacks as "niggers," especially as the abolition movement became more prominent, and in one story, a serialized romance, a servant was named "Sambo."[70] Stories dealing with African blacks dwelt on the "treachery" of a tribal chief and on the war-like nature of the tribes.[71] One suggested a comparison of natives with the orangutan.[72]

Bennett was a conservative democrat. An early editorial—written for the initial issue of the *New York Globe*, his first attempt at publishing a newspaper—stated the editor's political preference:

> My politics are well known. I was one of the first in this state to put the names of Jackson and Van Buren before the people in 1827—I fought through the great conflict in 1828, and again in June 1829, I was the first to bring the name of our venerable President up for a re-election. I have always supported the principles and nominations of the Democratic Party, and shall continue in that course. Opposed to nullification, I adhere to Jefferson's doctrines of State Rights—equal legislation—economy in public expenditures—reduction of unnecessary taxes—and the advancement of human liberty and human happiness.[73]

Echoing Jefferson's description of the United States following the Revolution, the *Herald*, in a December 1840 review of de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, referred to American government as "the great experiment."[74] And in a January 1840 political story comparing the whigs with the democrats, Bennett distinguished the two by claiming the former to be "forward-looking" and the latter "backward-looking" (apparently in the sense of looking "backward" to the rules of the Constitution).[75]

The *Herald* aimed a steady barrage of satire at its political opponents. Despite his general approval of Andrew Jackson, Bennett showed contempt for popular movements and for anything smacking of individual or organized popular protest. In a March 1837 editorial, he claimed that Jackson had "flung the mantle of his popularity . . . over the mob of New York" and suggested that Jackson had betrayed the democratic cause to the

69. *New York Herald*, 24 January 1840, p. 2, col. 2.
70. *New York Herald*, 6 April 1837, p. 1, col. 1; *New York Herald*, 12 August 1837, p. 1, cols. 1–2.
71. "Africa," *New York Herald*, 11 January 1840, p. 2, col. 3; "Intelligence from Africa," *New York Herald*, 28 March 1845, p. 2, col. 5.
72. "The Orang Outang," *New York Herald*, 21 July 1838, p. 2, col. 5.
73. Seitz, *The James Gordon Bennetts*, 32.
74. "Review of New Books," *New York Herald*, 13 December 1839, p. 1, col. 1.
75. *New York Herald*, 24 January 1840, p. 2, col. 2.

locofocos, whom Bennett viewed as a dangerously radical element in New York politics: "The locofocos of this city—the whole elements [sic] of the mob . . . begin a war against the possessors of power that will startle many before the year is out. There can be no mistake in this opinion. Events are daily bringing those matters to light. Watch the mob of this city—of every city—throughout the Union."[76] In an editorial apparently catering to the "possessors of power," Bennett likewise advised New Yorkers protesting against high rent to stay in their houses until legally evicted and only then protest, rather than openly gather in the streets.[77] And in a story about an encounter between a black and an Irishman over the right of way in a London street, the *Herald* satirized, with a Horatian wink, the "rights of equality" of the black.[78]

Although Bennett preached the doctrine of individual enterprise, especially where the *Herald* was concerned, this was apparently for the benefit of those "possessors of power," who, by virtue of their economic strength, were already in a position to control affairs. Not unlike the neoclassicists, Bennett, despite his avowal of independence and individualism in his operation of the *Herald*, generally favored the generic values of received institutions over those of the individual and satirized any departure from such values.[79] Unlike the romantics, he frequently showed little regard for famous romantic individuals, heroes, or hero-worship.[80] He seemed to feel that true democracy was accessible only in terms of the established and, for him, unchanging laws of the Constitution.

Although much was said during his own day about Bennett's language and his alleged corruption of the manners and morals of New York City, Bennett clearly thought of himself as a moral reformer.[81] In light of this, his coarseness may be viewed as part of the satirist's method of reduction, by way of raillery and ridicule, of those things felt to be in dire need of reform. This method may take, as Elliott has noted in the case of some of the most famous

76. *New York Herald*, 9 March 1837, p. 2, col. 1.
77. *New York Herald*, 4 February 1837, p. 2, col. 1.
78. *New York Herald*, 30 April 1836, p. 1, col. 3.
79. On Bennett's independence, see Seitz, *The James Gordon Bennetts*, 38–39. On satire's defense of received values, see Holman and Harmon, *Handbook to Literature*, 447.
80. See Carlson, *Man Who Made News*, 184, where he quotes from the *Herald* a satiric entry about heroes, in which Bennett's tone undercut his literal statement: "Wanted—a God.—We have nothing to admire in this country but General Jackson, and he is no great gun, or God either. We have no Napoleon—no Chevalier Bayard—no Philip Sidney. Washington is too good—too sacred for popular enchantment. We want a God like one of our Greek deities—part divinity—part fool. Such an article always enchants the populace." Drenched in irony, what this entry really said was that America needed no gods or heroes like Napoleon and that its great leaders should be as mundane as the unlettered Jackson, whom Bennett, himself a life-long Democrat, liked.
81. On Bennett's alleged corruption of morals, see Seitz, *The James Gordon Bennetts*, 80–84. On 20 July 1836, Bennett wrote: "I go for a general reformation of morals—of manners. I mean to begin a new movement in the progress of civilization and human intellect. I know and feel I shall succeed. Nothing can

satirists, the form of a "foul-mouthed insinuation and insult."[82] It may also include "realistic pictures of the seamy side of a society or a personality—sometimes scurrility or obscenity."[83] In other words, the purpose of the satirist in using language generally thought unsuitable by society is to deflate an overblown social pretentiousness and return culture to a more realistic and moral estate. This Bennett attempted to do.[84]

In an attempt to cut down to size what he apparently saw as pretentiousness in New York City, Bennett began to put taboo words in the *Herald*: "'pant,' 'legs,' and 'arms,' to say nothing of more hidden items of the human structure."[85] The editor revelled in driving home certain objectionable words: "Petticoats—petticoats—petticoats—petticoats—there—you fastidious fools, vent your mawkishness on that."[86] By satirizing the social foibles of New York City, Bennett hoped to restore its manners and morals to what was apparently for him a more desirable condition of an earlier time.

That condition included politics. As noted earlier, Bennett viewed the founding of the Constitution as a high water mark in American political history from which there had since been a serious falling away. The advent of new parties and "isms" he viewed as heresies. For him a great leader was not someone who possessed new and innovative ideas but someone "who understands discipline and tactics better than he does hair splitting on abstract and theoretical subtleties," as he wrote of General Winfield Scott in September 1858.[87]

Bennett idealized such politicians as Scott—instead of extremists concerned with "isms."[88] Although at first taken by the personal charm and character of the Hungarian freedom fighter Louis Kossuth, who had come to America to enlist international support for Hungarian freedom from Russia, Bennett turned against him

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prevent its success but God Almighty, and he happens to be entirely on my side. Get out of my way, ye drivelling editors and drivelling politicians—'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his path straight.'" Quoted in Jones, *Journalism in the United States*, 240.

82. Elliott, *Power of Satire*, 131.

83. *The Reader's Companion to World Literature*, ed. Lilian Herlands Hronstein (New York: Dryden, 1956), 403.

84. Seitz notes, in his chapter "The Moral War," that Bennett "saw human foibles with clear eyes and undertook a venturesome enterprise, that of knocking nonsense out of the human mind." Seitz said further that Bennett "saw creeping over the country a reign of formality and custom far more despotic than anything that could be devised politically" and knew that "eastern countries like India and China had been reduced to subjugation by caste and formalism, and had observed the severe effects of the latter on Scotland."

85. Seitz, *The James Gordon Bennetts*, 73.

86. Seitz, *The James Gordon Bennetts*, 73.

87. "Living Heroes and Live Politicians—Scott's Tactics a Necessity for the Opposition," *New York Herald*, 23 September 1858, p. 4, cols. 2–3.

88. "Living Heroes and Live Politicians," *New York Herald*, 23 September 1858, p. 4, cols. 2–3.

after Kossuth toured the South and became sharply critical of southern social institutions.[89]

To Bennett's mind it was not great individual romantic heroes like Kossuth who would restore the country from such heresies as Sewardism to a politics commensurate with, the editor felt, those expressed by the Constitution. It was, instead, conservatives like those in New York who would "redeem it from the foul embraces of the Seward disunion coalition, in the choice of such Assemblymen as will remove the seditious demagogue from the public councils, and restore New York to her ancient fellowship with the other States of the Union, North and South."[90] This "ancient fellowship" was based on the idea of a balance of power among the states, which rested on the idea of states' rights, accruing from a strict interpretation of the Constitution.[91] Though Bennett did not use the term, it was something to be sought by way of the neoclassicist's "backward glance" at models of an earlier culture.

Journalism historians have, in some ways then, misunderstood Bennett. They have noted well his tough talk and negative stance regarding social reform, but without providing any rationale. Bennett was a man who belonged in another time, the eighteenth century. His deistic ideas were, by his day, already old-fashioned and, as social constructs, had begun to give way to new ones based on the influence of the romantic movement. Bennett reacted against this in the manner of a fundamentalist preacher railing at his flock to repent—but without the preacher's normative restraints on language. The editor's satirical pen was devoted to deflating romantic optimism and to returning the country to an earlier and, for him, happier and more natural cultural/political system. As a result, although the *Herald* published its share of literature and gave attention to new literary movements, its poetry was largely neoclassical, bespeaking Bennett's preference for an earlier day and culture. The *Herald*'s literary and cultural criticism either heavily satirized and criticized the tenets of romanticism, or interpreted such matters as progress and mysticism in a way quite different from that of the romantics.

Elements of romanticism that called forth Bennett's wrath most strongly and directly were abolitionist emotionalism, which he called "fanaticism," and romantic religion, whose leaders he called by a variety of derogatory names. Bennett also objected strongly to the romantic imagination in general and to the romantic doctrine of progress put in social terms. His ideas about individual human rights and democracy were premised on his reaction against the romantic theory of nature and cast in almost

89. "Kossuth in the South, Attack on Mr. Clay Renewed, The Demagogue Declining," *New York Herald*, 9 April 1853, p. 4, col. 2.
90. "The Programme of W. H. Seward and the Elections for the Assembly," *New York Herald*, 3 October 1854, p. 4, col. 2.
91. "The New Northern Party—Seward in the Field for the Presidency," *New York Herald*, 19 August 1854, p. 4, cols. 2–3.

exclusively neoclassicist terms. His "tough" language is best understood as social satire aimed at an increasingly romantic world view.

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JAMES AGEE'S DOCUMENTARY EXPRESSION: *LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN* AS JOURNALISM

Crossings at the Fact-Fiction Border

Edna Boone Johnson and Mary Helen Brown

WHEN FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1941, James Agee's book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* was perhaps too odd or too ordinary to be a commercial success. *Famous Men* sold fewer than six hundred copies, met with mixed critical success, and aroused almost no public reaction. By the time the book was published, "readers had grown weary of reading of the Depression and their interests turned to the turmoil in Europe and the Pacific."[1] The topic of Agee's book did not arouse enough interest to offset any misgivings or stimulate curiosity about its improvised style. Nevertheless the publisher, Houghton Mifflin, kept the title on the company's backlist until 1953. Even after the book had been remaindered, with copies selling for as little as nineteen cents, it sold fewer than four thousand copies.[2]

When *Famous Men* was republished by Houghton Mifflin in 1960, five years after Agee's death, it was hailed as one of the most important books of the 1930s and a literary masterpiece.[3] In hardcover and paperback editions, it has sold nearly half a million copies since then.[4] The differences in the book's lack of early success and its reception in the 1960s rested in part in changes in its audiences. In the 1930s and 1940s, readers had difficulty placing the book into a recognizable literary category.[5] Although the book was a part of the documentary reportage of the day, Agee's views of that genre—ranging from ambivalence to dislike—led him to use techniques that violated documentary's narrative

1. Mark A. Doty, *Tell Me Who I Am: James Agee's Search for Selfhood* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 64.
2. Laurence Bergreen, *James Agee: A Life* (New York: Dutton, 1984), 260; Genevieve Moreau, *The Restless Journey of James Agee* (New York: Morrow, 1977), 198, 306.
3. Moreau, *Restless Journey*, 273.
4. Bergreen, *James Agee: A Life*, 409.
5. Alfred T. Barson, *A Way of Seeing* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), 105.

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conventions. The methods he employed "confounded the expectations of many readers."[6] As Robert Fitzgerald writes, "In New York journalism of the thirties no one created anything like the Alabama book."[7]

By the 1960s readers had come to accept Agee's use of a wide range of literary techniques to create authenticity. Agee's work now meshed with the work of the 1960s writers known as New Journalists, whose work obscured the line between fact and fiction in its quest for truth. Truth for these writers, Eric Heyne argues, consisted of two elements, accuracy and meaning: "The former involves a kind of groundwork, a detailed and sufficiently neutral representation of events, for which the goal is universal agreement or correspondence. The latter is more nebulous, covering virtually everything one does with 'the facts' once they have been given an accurate shape."[8]

According to Shelley Fishkin, Agee faced the dilemma of using his own weaknesses and his medium to present adequately the appalling conditions faced by the farmers in Alabama. To meet this dilemma he chose strategies that would make his book "so different from all that went before it."[9] Those strategies predated yet blended with the literary journalism of the 1960s. Writers of the 1960s and 1970s altered the "objective" facts of events in order to achieve a higher truth.[10] To do this, they took aesthetic license to present their stories in a way that was free from the traditional bonds of journalism.[11] Although the New Journalists have been criticized for their lack of discipline and objectivity, they did change the way that readers were able to understand the narrative strategies of earlier experimental writers such as Agee.[12]

Famous Men represented a departure from Agee's previous magazine work. After graduating from Harvard in 1932, Agee began writing for *Fortune* magazine, started only two years earlier, and, like *Time*, the brainchild of Henry Luce. Its circulation was more than one hundred thousand issues a month. The twenty-

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6. Paul Ashdown, "James Agee," in *A Sourcebook of American Literary Journalism: Representative Writers in an Emerging Genre*, ed. Thomas B. Connery (New York: Greenwood, 1992), 198.
7. Robert Fitzgerald, "A Memoir," in *Remembering James Agee*, ed. David Madden (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1974), 94.
8. Eric Heyne, "Toward a Theory of Literary Nonfiction," *Modern Fiction Studies* 33 (Autumn 1987): 486.
9. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, "The Borderlands of Culture: Writing by W. E. B. Du Bois, James Agee, Tillie Olsen, and Gloria Anzaldua," in *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Norman Sims (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 149.
10. Thomas B. Connery, "Discovering a Literary Form," in *Sourcebook of Literary Journalism*, 15–17.
11. John J. Pauly, "The Politics of the New Journalism," in *Literary Journalism*, 124.
12. David L. Eason, "On Journalistic Authority: The Janet Cooke Scandal," in *Media, Myths, and Narratives: Television and the Press*, ed. James W. Carey (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1988), 217.

two-year-old Agee was hired—for fifty dollars a week with the promise of as much as twelve thousand dollars annually in a few years—because of his work as the editor of Harvard's literary magazine, the *Advocate*.[13] Whatever problems plagued his career at *Fortune*, or however poorly he managed his finances, he was well paid, especially by Depression standards. As Agee would discover in a few years, his weekly salary was more than some Southern tenant farmers earned in a year.

Agee, however, had reservations about working for a magazine—any magazine, but especially one so conservative as *Fortune*.[14] He was considered immensely talented, but his personal habits—heavy drinking and smoking, little sleep, and too many women—affected his work and his temperament. He often lamented his financial dependence on journalism and, at times, openly loathed the profession. About the magazine, he wrote, "It varies with me from a sort of hard, masochistic liking to direct nausea."[15] At other times he likened the experience to working "in a whorehouse."[16]

Famous Men grew out of a *Fortune* assignment in which Agee and photographer Walker Evans were asked to investigate and report on Southern sharecroppers. Agee's job was to report on the farmers' daily lives, the farm economy, and federal and state government efforts to improve conditions.[17] He and Evans intended to stay a month. The assignment was the "best break I ever had at *Fortune*," Agee wrote in a letter dated 18 June 1936, to his longtime friend and confidant, Father James Flye: "Feel terrific personal responsibility to bring it off."[18] After his return, Agee wrote Flye that the trip was "certainly one of the best things I've ever had happen to me."[19]

The assignment took eight weeks, four of them spent in a sharecropper's farmhouse in Hale County, Alabama, probably near Moundville. The book carefully records those four weeks in the home of Floyd Burroughs, whom Agee called George Gudger. Gudger was thirty-one at the time, married with three children whose ages ranged from ten to twenty months. Agee and Evans also spent time with two other tenant families, the Fields and the Tengles, whom he called the Woods and the Ricketts. Woods was fifty-nine, married to his second wife, and had five children or stepchildren; Ricketts was fifty-four, married with seven children.

When *Fortune*, the source of Agee's own financial security, sent him to Alabama, he was awakened to the horror of the Depression. In 1929, farm commodity prices were as low as they had been in

13. Bergreen, *James Agee: A Life*, 108; Moreau, *Restless Journey*, 107.
14. Moreau, *Restless Journey*, 107.
15. Bergreen, *James Agee: A Life*, 138.
16. W. M. Frohock, "James Agee: The Question of Unkept Promise," *Southwest Review* 42 (Summer 1957): 223.
17. Moreau, *Restless Journey*, 133.
18. James H. Flye, *The Letters of James Agee to Father Flye* (New York: Brazilier, 1962), 92.
19. Flye, *Letters to Flye*, 94.

Elizabethan England.[20] Alabama was suffering from the Depression as much, and perhaps more, than any state in the country.[21] The average sharecropper's income in 1935 was seventy-one dollars per person or twenty cents a day.[22] The average American farm family—not sharecropper—earned $1,240 in 1929, about a third of the average for non-farm families.[23] Sharecroppers' homes were often hovels, two- and three-bedroom shacks without running water, electricity, or adequate sanitary facilities. In 1937, a story in the *New York Times Magazine* described the typical Southern tenant farmer:

> The tenant has nothing to offer the landlord except his physical stamina and his ability to raise a crop. He has no mules and no tools he can call his own. His diet and that of his family usually consists of cornmeal and molasses, fat meat and cow peas. And his children show it. Undernourished and slim . . . they may tell you that the "eatin" food suits them fine, but the medical examiners say they are victims of pellagra.[24]

Agee wrote three articles praising the Alabama farmers and decrying their situation. But these pieces went beyond the length and scope the magazine could use. *Fortune*'s readers had become wary of the magazine's progressive leanings, and new, conservative guidelines for articles were in place. The editors tried to find a way to run the material serially or to edit it but found these to be impossible tasks.[25] Agee, recognizing the dilemma, wrote Father Flye that "it would be impossible to write of their experiences in any form or length *Fortune* would find ap-propriate."[26] In fact, *Fortune* found the articles "unprintable."[27]

Agee was asked to rewrite them with a more moderate tone.[28] He never did. Eventually—and only after a struggle—*Fortune* released his notes and photographs, so that Agee could write a book about his experiences. Agee believed that traditional reporting could not tell the story of the tenant farmers, and he doubted that he could properly pay homage to the courage of his subjects by the usual means. So he developed his own form of documentary expression.[29]

Agee's blending of fiction and fact, of literature and journalism,

20. Thomas J. Landenburg and Samuel Hugh Brockunier, *The Prosperity and Depression Decades* (New York: Hayden,1971), 99.
21. Thomas D. Clark, *The South since Reconstruction* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973),117.
22. Landenburg and Brockunier, *The Prosperity and Depression Decades*, 108.
23. Clark, *The South since Reconstruction*, 117.
24. Felix Belair, "Portrait of a Tenant," *New York Times Magazine*, 18 April 1937, 11.
25. T. S. Matthews, "James Agee—'Strange and Wonderful,'" *Saturday Review*, April 1966, 22.
26. Flye, *Letters to Flye*, 100.
27. Fishkin, "Borderlands of Culture," 145.
28. Moreau, *Restless Journey*, 142.
29. Fishkin, "Borderlands of Culture," 147.

was not without precedent. Flexible boundaries and cross fertilization of literature and journalism had been present since at least the 1830s.[30] During the late 1920s and early 1930s documentary "reportage" achieved recognition, in response to the inadequacy of traditional journalism in depicting the Depression. It was a personal, literary journalism "that was different from what appeared in newspapers."[31] This form combined many of the techniques of fiction with those of traditional journalism and also revealed something of the state of mind of its author.[32] Like the New Journalists of the 1960s, Agee responded in a personal way to his subject matter, and this "personalization" affected every aspect of his writing.[33]

Agee had little use for the documentary reporting of the time. He felt his contemporaries manipulated their subjects to serve political or private purposes. William Stott writes that Agee "treated his subject without condescension and without trying to amuse."[34] In fact, in the preface to *Famous Men*, Agee calls his work an "insult, and a corrective" to those documentaries.[35] He used his "power as a writer" to create a form of writing that combined the minutiae of the tenant farmers' lives with his own detailed self-analysis.[36] Fishkin calls the result "one of the most startling texts contemporary American culture has produced."[37]

Agee held particular disdain for another book about cotton tenantry, *You Have Seen Their Faces*, with text by Erskine Caldwell and photographs by Margaret Bourke-White. Jefferson Hunter writes that Agee could not forgive Bourke-White and Caldwell "for making money out of appalling poverty."[38] Alfred Kazan writes that *Famous Men* was "begun as a typical documentary assignment and ended by being an attack on the facile mechanics and passivity of most documentary assignments."[39] For Agee, *Famous Men* represented moral as well as literary concerns.[40] Even so, evidence

30. Thomas B. Connery, "A Third Way to Tell the Story: American Journalism at the Turn of the Century," in *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century*, 4.
31. James Boylan, "Publicity for the Great Depression: Newspaper Default and Literary Reportage," in *Mass Media between the Wars*, ed. Catherine L. Covert and John D. Stevens (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984),165.
32. Ronald Weber, *The Reporter as Artist* (New York: Hastings House, 1974), 14–15; Weber, *The Literature of Fact* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1980), 13; *The Literary Journalists*, ed. Norman Sims (New York: Ballentine, 1984), 3.
33. Pauly, "New Journalism," 114.
34. William Stott, *Documentary Expression in Thirties America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 262.
35. James Agee and Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), xv. Page numbers for subsequent references will be noted in the text.
36. Fishkin, "Borderlands of Culture," 151.
37. Fishkin, "Borderlands of Culture," 147
38. Jefferson Hunter, *Image and Word: The Interaction of Twentieth Century Photographs and Texts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 70.
39. Alfred Kazan, *On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1942), 493.
40. Mark Allister, "Seeing, Knowing, and Being: James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*," *Prose Studies* 9 (December 1986): 86.

suggests that Agee felt his own work had little long-term significance. He initially wanted *Famous Men* printed on newsprint "so that it would crumble in fifty years to dust."[41]

Agee went beyond the bounds of the social documentary of the time in creating what Alfred Kazan calls "a documentary book to end all documentary books."[42] As Dale Maharidge and Michael Williamson point out in *And Their Children after Them*, "Agee's study was not only a report of a major period of our history but became itself an important event in that history."[43] Agee realized words alone were inadequate for describing the farmers' plight. Mark Allister argues that *Famous Men* is also "a literary manifesto about the capacity (or incapacity) of language."[44] So Agee used every technique at his disposal—poetry, music, photography, storytelling, inventory, reporting, and more—to create *Famous Men*. It is a book that "accumulates from within rather than conforms to surrounding molds."[45] In particular, Agee uses three literary techniques extensively—unorthodox organizational patterns, novel punctuation and typography, and unusual syntax.

Famous Men is both rambling and disjointed. Agee's story shows "a rambling disjointed structure, possessing at best only a faintly distinguishable pattern of organization [that] taxes the reader," according to Richard Kallan.[46] A 1941 review of the book noted that "While their book is mainly the story of tenant farmers, the author has included a mass of unrelated, nonsensical material, some parts almost the ravings of a lunatic, while others are beautiful, lyric prose of high merit, not entirely related to sharecropping."[47] Another critic of that era, Selden Rodman, argues that the book's failed structure is its distinguishing element: "Part of the greatness and unique quality of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, then, is its structural failure, its overall failure as the 'work of art' it does not aim or presume to be and which from moment to moment it is."[48] Rodman declares the book so frustrating that readers "will from time to time . . . throw down the volume in a rage, and curse the author for a confused adolescent."[49]

Famous Men reaches back and forth through time. Themes and

41. David Madden, *Remembering James Agee* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974),11.
42. Kazan, *Native Grounds*, 495.
43. Dale Maharidge and Michael Williamson, *And Their Children after Them* (New York: Pantheon, 1989), xxii.
44. Allister, "Seeing, Knowing," 236. Paul Ashdown refers to *Famous Men* as an "anti-journalistic manifesto." In *James Agee: Selected Journalism*, ed. Paul Ashdown (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), xiii.
45. Gordon O. Taylor, *Chapters of Experience: Studies in Twentieth Century American Autobiography* (New York: St. Martin's, 1983), 67.
46. Richard A. Kallan, "Style and the New Journalism: A Rhetorical Analysis of Tom Wolfe," *Communication Monographs* 46 (March 1979): 60–61.
47. L. R. Etzkorn, "Review of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*," *Library Journal* 66 (August 1941): 667.
48. Selden Rodman, "Review of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*," *Saturday Review of Literature*, 23 August 1941, 6.
49. Rodman, "Review of *Famous Men*," 6.

conclusions are repeated, but Agee apparently considers these repetitions requisite. Writing of the oppressive working conditions, he admits that "I have said this now three times. If I were capable, as I wish I were, I could say it once in such a way that it would be there in its complete awefulness. Yet knowing, too, how it is repeated upon each of them, in every day of their lives, so powerfully, so entirely, that it is simply the natural air they breathe, I wonder whether it could be said enough times" (320). His repetition reflects the repetitiveness of farmers' lives. Agee's spelling of "awefulness," not only underscores the horrendous conditions but also his wonder that the farmers survive.

Famous Men begins in fits and sputters. Readers wade through a multitude of prefaces before finding a traditional text. First are Evans's uncaptioned photos. Next is a title page, copyright, and dedication. In the 1960 edition, Evans's foreword and then Agee's preface come next. At this point, Agee encourages readers not to read the book in the order in which it occurs. He writes parenthetically, "Serious readers are advised to proceed to the book-proper after finishing the first section of the Preface. A later return will do no harm" (xiii).

However, determining at which point the "book-proper" begins is not easy. After the initial preface, readers find a list of contents including "Book One Preliminaries" and "Book One." Book 1 is only five pages and is numbered as though it were part of the preface. The preliminaries have a poem, a quote, the opening sentences of another book, and a list of people and places in *Famous Men*. The list describes Agee and Evans as "spy" and "counter-spy," respectively, and includes other "unpaid agitators," such as Jesus Christ, William Blake, and Sigmund Freud. Then comes the title page for book 2 and a second list of contents. Agee refers to this list as the "Design of Book Two." Book 2 is the 471-page body of the text. Yet before the traditional prose begins, there is yet another poem and another preamble. Though readers surely are confused and disoriented by the odd introductions, Agee is trying to destroy preconceptions about what a book should be and, perhaps, what tenant farmers are like. At no point can readers be comfortable with this text; the design is meant to disturb, confuse, and discombobulate.

The "book proper" is no model of traditional structure. Agee describes the farmers and their living conditions, then explains how he came to live with them. His structural devices are equally nontraditional. He ends subsections by interrupting himself with, for example, Biblical references (81), rhetorical questions (91), and dialogue (73). The "Intermission"—the cinematic allusion is telling—also interrupts the flow of the text. At another point he interrupts the prose with another table of contents for the upcoming shelter information (125–26).

His "On the Porch" sections also work as nontraditional structural devices. His original intent apparently was to use those sections solely as a preface:

> I may as well explain that On the Porch was written to stand as the beginning of a much longer book, in which the whole subject would be disposed of in one volume. It is here intended still in part as a preface or opening, but also as a frame and as an undertone and as the set stage and center of action, in relation to which all other parts of this volume are intended as flashbacks, foretastes, illuminations and contra-dictions. (245)

The structure of *Famous Men* is a journalism-literature hybrid. As Kallan argues, this form "rejects orderly structure and systematic development—an art wherein a work's total sensory impact, rather than any single element, is what matters."[50]

Famous Men ends as fitfully as it begins. The "book-proper" seems to end with the statement "End of Part Three" (432). But this is followed by an epilogue and two images from Shady Grove Cemetery. These leave readers with a final impression of futility and inevitability. The book, in Agee's words, closes with the Lord's Prayer, followed by yet another disclaimer: "The last words of this book have been spoken and these that follow are not words; they are only description of two images" (441). The book continues about thirty more pages. It ends with "(On the Porch: 3" which is, of course, a part of the preface. Thus the book goes full circle, reinforcing the notion that the farmers' experiences are never-ending and that the truth of their experience—indeed, of any experience—does not allow formal, textual closure. The sharecroppers' experience cannot be conveyed within the closure of a beginning, middle, and end required in traditional literary narration. Agee works to create the non-linear effect of a collage of images.

Agee's use of punctuation and typography is also far from traditional. Typically, he uses both to represent a process, an inventory, or elements in the environment while at the same time forcing his audience out of a comfortable reading of the text.[51] Agee frequently writes long sentences filled with semicolons and commas. For instance, he describes the route from the Gudger's home to those of the other two families in one sentence: "Don't take the path to the left then: that only leads to the spring; but cut straight up the slope; and down it, and through a space of pine, hickory, dead logs and blackberry brambles (damp spider webs will bind on your face in the dark; but the path is easily enough followed); and out beyond this, across a great entanglement of clay ravines, which finally solidify into a cornfield" (75).

Some of Agee's sentences go on for pages with a bewildering array of punctuation marks. The opening sentence of the "First Meetings" section continues for approximately five pages. When Agee describes cotton farming, the sentences and paragraphs become longer as the process becomes increasingly tedious. Such

50. Kallan, "Style and the New Journalism," 51.
51. Fishkin, "Borderlands of Culture," 151.

sentences capture the immediacy of the process being described, allowing readers to experience it vicariously rather than merely observe.

Punctuation and typography also serve to inventory items. On page 258, for instance, Agee catalogues Mrs. Gudger's appearance in short, choppy, dramatic sentences that command special note from readers:

> Saturday, Mrs. Gudger
> Face, hands, feet and legs are washed.
> The hair is done up more tightly than usual.
> Black or white cotton stockings.
> Black lowheeled slippers with strapped insteps and single buttons.
> A freshly laundered cotton print dress held together high at the throat with a ten-cent brooch.
> A short necklace with black glass beads.
> A hat.

Agee then describes other aspects of her wardrobe in painstaking detail. Similar lists include objects on the Gudgers' rear bedroom mantle, Gudger's Sunday clothes, and schoolbooks. Through punctuation and typography, Agee removes these items from the context of the farmers' lives, thereby reinforcing his objectivity and veracity.

Punctuation and typography also simulate the farmers' environment, often by the paradigmatic or iconographic effects of photography. For example, Agee arranges a segment of text on page 166 to match a hexagon-shaped fragment of newspaper:

> GHAM NEWS
> hursday afternoon, March 5, 1936
> Price: 3 cents
> in G
> (else
> Thousa
> are on d
> througho
> cording it
> for the Birm

His punctuation and typography here underscore his fidelity to reality, to what he actually saw. At another point (page 197), Agee also describes a sign in the Gudger's house and then illustrates it:

> The sign is made on the smooth side of a rectangle of corrugated cardboard, in blue crayon, part in print and part in a lopside running hand, and reads:
> PLEAS!
> be
> QUITE

Oddly enough, given Agee's penchant for detail, his representation of the sign is not accurate. A photograph in the book includes the sign, which adds in script "Every body is Welcome." Agee's

omission of this last sentence signals a contradiction between the text and its photographs. It is impossible to know whether Agee was mistaken in his remembrance of the sign, intentionally left out the latter message, or recognized his mistake when he saw the photo in Evans's collection but did not care enough to correct his prose. Certainly "Every body is Welcome" adds a brighter note to the sign, which otherwise seems the product of a harried, weary household where peace and quiet are rare.

Agee also uses punctuation and typography to signify sounds. In "(On the Porch: 3," Agee tries to recall a sound he and Evans heard. In the midst of a conventional prose description, Agee offers a visual representation of the sound's rhythm and accents: "———:—:—:—:" (464). Reflecting Agee's interest in musical effects and thus score-like, this representation supports and illustrates the sound more effectively than traditional prose could. Agee's most dramatic use of typography comes in "In the room: the Testament." He begins to describe a family Bible kept in his bedroom: "very cheap; bound in a limp fake-leather which was almost slightly damp; a family bible" (422). He then breaks off the prose for a script-written reproduction of the Bible's pages, complete with oversized print and lines filled in with genealogical information. The typography gives readers the impression they are seeing an exact facsimile of what Agee found. Agee probably found such a Bible; he did not, however, find the printed names because he, of course, uses pseudonyms.

Agee's punctuation and typography graphically represent elements unavailable to traditional prose, such as the rhythm of a sound. He labors to take readers' sensibilities beyond the effects of traditional fiction or journalism to the same literal, immediate truth that photographs seem to claim.

Finally, the language and syntax of *Famous Men* is noteworthy. Many of the book's sections are written in stream-of-consciousness style as Agee drifts from scene to scene and point to point. Occasionally he seems to step out of the text and talk to readers. In "(On the Porch: 2," for example, Agee turns from describing his approach to writing to casually addressing the reader: "From the amount I am talking about 'this experience' you may have got the idea I think it was of some egregious importance. In that case you will be cheated in proportion to your misapprehension. This 'experience' was just a series of various, fairly complicated, and to me interesting, things which I perceived or which happened to me last summer, that's all" (244). His syntax is straightforward, his language simple. This apparent disclaimer of profundity has the secondary effect of making a special claim to transparent fact.

The section entitled "A Country Letter" contains five parts, each written in a rambling style. The first, which serves as a preface to the others, sets the scene for Agee's writing. The four numbered sections that follow introduce readers to the tenant families and their living arrangements. In these sections, Agee begins to reveal

his relationships with the families by interweaving description, dialogue, and action almost as though he were writing a letter to a friend.

In "A Country Letter," Agee uses an "adjectival/adverbial barrage," a technique often found in literary nonfiction.[52] This technique allows him to set the emotions and the ambiance of a scene. Many of the "barrages" in *Famous Men* connote darkness and night. In Evans's preface to the 1960 edition, he recalls that Agee worked best at night: "The work, I think, was largely night-written. Literally the result shows this; some of the sections read best at night, far in the night. The first passage of 'A Country Letter' is particularly night-permeated" (xi). With immediate visual stimulus suspended in the darkness, Agee would be inclined to recover a sense of full reality by oversaturating his prose with "adjectival/adverbial" modifiers.

Another example of the barrage comes in Agee's description of the lumber yard where Gudger works to supplement his income: "The road splits round it between tall drenched weeds and meets itself at the far end where, still close within the cold, dark, early shade, are the soot-black scaffolded structures of sawmill machinery and of power; the tall black candle of the stack torched-off with clear curling heat beneath the stained flag of rust-lighted smoke" (92). The assault of adjectives and adverbs destroys any sentimentalizing of rural industry. Like Dickens, Agee knew how to create the sense of unrelieved bleakness.

In other sections Agee creates a conversational tone. "Intermission: Conversation in the Lobby" steps away from his theme, the tenant farmers, and discusses his answers to a questionnaire sent to writers by the *Partisan Review*. Agee admits that this may seem an unusual departure: "Readers who think that in printing this here I am (a) digressing from the subject of this volume, or (b) indulging in a literary quarrel, are welcome to their thoughts" (348). But, he writes, the questionnaire made him angry, and he purposefully included it. In effect, Agee's discussion of the questionnaire offers a change in language, subject, and tone following lengthy and detailed sections on money, shelter, clothing, education, and work.

Agee's self-reflexive digression also reiterates his own approach to writing. Agee was first sent the questionnaire in 1939, at a time when he was frustrated both at work and with his own attempts at poetry and book writing. He rails at the questionnaire's source and at other members of the literary community: "The questions are so bad and so betraying, they are virtually unanswerable; and are indeed more interesting as betrayals, that you only think you know what good work is, and have no right to your proprietary attitudes about it" (352). *Partisan Review* rejected his answers and would not print them; therefore, he requested their return and printed them in *Famous Men*. He wants readers to know his stand,

52. Kallan, "Style and the New Journalism," 58.

and including his answers signals that his is a book about writing as well as about sharecroppers. *Famous Men* is his heartfelt attempt at a genre capable of reporting both the literal truth of journalism and the literary truth of fiction.

Agee tells the *Partisan Review* editors that they do not know enough about good writing to devise an acceptable questionnaire. By including his reactions to the questionnaire, Agee is telling both the editors and his readers that they should not rely on traditional measures or inferior critics to judge his book.

By using an unorthodox organization, unusual punctuation and typography, and nontraditional language and syntax, Agee created a tension between traditional approaches to journalism and literature and thus extended the limits of 1930s documentary expression. It is this tension that gives the book much of its power, its appeal to contemporary readers, and its place in literary history. Critics and scholars have labeled *Famous Men* many things: "a literary innovation,"[53] "a covert autobio-graphy,"[54] "a miscellaneous book,"[55] "a prose poem."[56] Agee himself called it "anti-artistic, anti-scientific, and anti-journalistic."[57] Yet, by mixing factual with fictional techniques, *Famous Men* emerges as a work that seeks the authority of journalism and the aesthetic license of fiction in its quest for the truth about Alabama tenant farmers.

53. Granville Hicks, "Not for Casual Giving. Review of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*," *Saturday Review*, December 1960, 21.
54. Frohock, "James Agee," 225.
55. Dwight Macdonald, *Against the American Grain* (New York: Random, 1962), 156.
56. Durante Da Ponte, "James Agee: The Quest for Identity," *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 8 (1963): 27.
57. James Agee, "A Diary of My Future," *Esquire*, November 1968, 115.

"IN THE WAKE OF THE NEWS":
The Beginnings of a Sports Column, by HEK

Alfred Lawrence Lorenz

TO THE READERS OF THE *Chicago Tribune* over the last eighty-five years, one of the delights of opening the newspaper each morning has been a standing column on the first page of the sports section, "In the Wake of the News." Although the form has changed, depending on the style and whim of each of its conductors, the feature has survived the years and changes in journalistic conventions to become the longest-running sports column in American journalism and second in longevity among all American newspaper columns only to the *Kansas City Star*'s "Starbeams." That it has done so is due in large part to the man who created it: Hugh Edmund Keough. Keough turned the column out of his typewriter five days a week for its first five years under the byline "By HEK." It was so widely read, and he was so popular a figure personally as well as professionally, that on his death *Tribune* editors decided that it should continue.

Keough's first "In the Wake of the News" was published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* of Tuesday, 30 July 1907, as the Tuesday through Saturday counterpart, and mirror image, of a column that he had been writing for the *Sunday Tribune* for four years, "Some Offside Plays." Both columns gave the *Tribune*'s readers a kind of journalistic-literary patchwork of his comment on sports: prose and verse, fact and fiction, seriousness and humor (both slapstick and deadpan), the blade of satire and the comforting arm of compassion, Keough's own material and contributions from his readers. The common thread was his love for games and the men who played them, his keen sense of observation, his sparkling wit and his talent for writing. All had been well-honed during a career of nearly twenty-five years as a sports writer.

A true "journeyman" journalist, Keough had broken into newspapering on the *Spectator* in his native Hamilton, Ontario, in 1881, at the age of seventeen, and became more experienced on

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newspapers in Indianapolis and Logansport, Indiana.[1] He moved to Chicago at twenty to be a reporter and later, editor for the weekly *Sporting and Theatrical Journal*, a newspaper designed to keep promoters, theater and arena managers, and sports figures and actors up to date on people and events in their fields.[2] He also enjoyed the free and easy social world of Chicago journalism. He became a member of the rather select Whitechapel Club, which flourished for a time in the back room of a saloon in Newsboy's Alley on excessive drink and the clever conversation of its members. Keough sat alongside such soon-to-be-luminaries as Finley Peter Dunne, George Ade, Brand Whitlock, and Opie Read, and in the thrust and parry of wisecrack and put-down, he was considered one of the best.[3]

Keough moved into daily journalism in 1891, when what *Tribune* sports editor Harvey T. Woodruff, a later "Wake" conductor, called "his sharp and trenchant pen" won him the job of "sporting editor" of the *Chicago Times*. There he wrote the news of sport during the week and indulged his literary inclinations with a Sunday column. It evolved from a recitation of stories of racing people and their horses over the pseudonym "Hyder All" to a collection of miscellaneous paragraphs under the heading "In the Sporting Swim" and signed "H. E. K." Also included were one or two verses of humorous poetry, or even epic-length works, all precursors of the material that would win him readers at the *Tribune*.[4]

Keough stayed at the *Times* until it merged with the *Chicago Herald* in 1895. After the merger, he left for San Francisco and a brief stint as sporting editor of the *Chronicle*, then moved to New Orleans to handle the same job on the *Item*. But he was back in Chicago within three years, and editor of the short-lived *World of Sport*.[5] Where he worked immediately afterwards is not known, though according to Woodruff he left journalism temporarily in the late 1890s to act as an official at racetracks in the South, East, and Midwest.[6] If he did forsake journalism for the racetrack, his "old tools," as he referred to his journalistic skills, were never far away.[7] In 1904 he began what would be a two-year stint as managing editor of the *Lake County* (Indiana) *Times*, commuting to suburban Hammond from his South Side Chicago home and free-lancing "Some Offside Plays" to the *Tribune*.[8]

1. *Chicago Tribune*, 10 June 1912.
2. *Sporting and Theatrical Journal*, 18 April 1888.
3. Charles H. Dennis, "Whitechapel Nights," *Chicago Daily News*, 27 July to 5 September 1936.
4. See, for example, *Chicago Times*, 21 February, 1 and 8 March 1891, 1 January 1892, 30 April 1894, 10 June 1894.
5. *The Lakeside Annual Directory of the City of Chicago, 1898*, comp. R. H. Donnelly (Chicago, 1898). Keough was listed in Chicago city directories of 1884 through 1894, 1898 and 1899, and 1901 through 1912.
6. *Chicago Tribune*, 6 July 1912.
7. *Chicago Tribune*, 9 July 1908.
8. *Chicago Tribune*, 6 July 1908; *Lake County Times*, 10 June 1912.

In the nearly twenty years since Keough had first practiced journalism in Chicago, the city had become the center of "the column-writing industry," as the *Review of Reviews* observed some years later, and as a newspaperman he would undoubtedly have read the columns that appeared each day.[9] Among the most prominent were those by two men who had broken into Chicago journalism at about the same time as Keough, his Whitechapel cronies Finley Peter Dunne and George Ade.[10] Dunne created in the *Post* the philosophical Irish bartender Mr. Dooley, who commented on the social-political life of Chicago and the rest of the country from behind the fictional bar Dunne constructed for him in the back-of-the-stockyards neighborhood of Bridgeport. Ade gained popularity in the summer of 1893 by writing of the people and places of the World's Columbian Exposition in the *Record* column "All Roads Lead to the Fair," which was illustrated with the sketches of the young cartoonist John T. McCutcheon. In November of that year, he was assigned another column, "Stories of the Streets and Town," also illustrated by McCutcheon, in which he "explored nearly every literary possibility that a newspaper column could offer." He wrote short stories, parodies and humorous essays, and what he called "fables in slang" on the manners and morals of the people of the city.[11]

In a slightly different vein, Eugene Field of the *Daily News* was writing "Sharps and Flats," into which he poured twenty-three hundred words a day of unrelated paragraphs of prose commingled with light verse.[12] It was there that readers first enjoyed his "Little Boy Blue" and "Wynken, Blynken and Nod."[13] Bert Leston Taylor ("B. L. T.") wrote a front-page column for the *Journal*, "A Little of Everything," and in 1901, hired away by the *Tribune*'s managing editor James Keeley, he established "A Line o' Type or Two" in the *Tribune*. The "Line" was a potpourri of single paragraph comments, short sketches, verse and aphorisms, some odd, some humorous. It ran on the editorial page and, for three-quarters of a century, provided counterpoint to the weightier matters discussed there.[14]

Others like them practiced the column conductor's trade all

9. "Our 'Columns' and 'Column' Writers," *Review of Reviews* 72 (October 1925): 428.

10. One biographer credits the Whitechapel Club and the associations Ade had there as a major influence on his development as a writer. Lee Coyle, *George Ade* (New York: Twayne, 1964), 26.

11. John J. Pauly, "George Ade," in *A Sourcebook of American Literary Journalism: Representative Writers in an Emerging Genre*, ed. Thomas B. Connery (New York, Greenwood, 1992), 111. See also James DeMuth, *Small Town Chicago: The Comic Perspectives of Finley Peter Dunne, George Ade and Ring Lardner* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1980), passim.

12. DeMuth, *Small Town Chicago*, 20.

13. Harriet Monroe, "Newspaper Verse," *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* 19 (March 1922): 327,

14. Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History, 1690–1960*, 3d ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 583; "Our 'Columns' and 'Column' Writers," 430.

across the country at the turn of the century, from Frank O'Brien in the *New York Press* to Henry James in the *Los Angeles Tribune*, and from Fred Heiskell in the *Arkansas Gazette* to Harry M. Lynch of the *Kokomo* (Indiana) *Daily Tribune*.[15] Their work, the column, or "Colyum" in the vernacular of readers, was a "new literary form," the *Saturday Review* would observe. It was the creation of "inventive America," distinguished from its staid British cousin, the "*column* of comment," by its "lack of order and proportion, a certain wild spontaneity." While it existed in a variety of forms in different newspapers, in whatever style a "Colyum" was written, "its conductor's fundamental attitude is this, 'it is my daily (or weekly) endeavor to conceal from you the fact that I take myself at all seriously.' The true 'Colyum' is a perpetual, whimsical turning-inside-out of the 'Colyum' conductor's personality."[16]

Another observer at the time noted that hardly a newspaper was without "its funny column; smaller papers borrow their wit, larger ones keep a jester of their own." But the "colyumists" were "something more than mere funny men. A bit of social satire, of homely philosophy, of keen interpretation, always lurks behind the smile. A fable of George Ade's is apt to provoke the comment 'That's so,' instead of 'That's funny.' And thus we have the paradox that our humorists prove us to be a serious people."[17]

To Keough's Chicago contemporary Harriet Monroe, editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, and a contributor to the *Tribune*, the "Colyum" conductors' work, as she had seen it in the first quarter of the century, was "straight American stuff, expressive of our kind of smiling common-sense, our special good-natured chuckle, over the piffle and burble, the mawkishness and pretense which encumber our every-day life. Such wit from the colyumists is a shaft of sunlight on the breakfast-table—it clears the air and gleams on the sharpened edge of the mind."[18]

Their offerings were both journalistic and literary, a blending of the factual and the fictional, and in both style and substance—what has come to be known as literary journalism. The resulting

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15. Readers responding to W. B. Blake's question in *Collier's* magazine "Who writes the best 'colyum' in any daily paper in this country?" overwhelmingly voted for Taylor and for Franklin P. Adams, writer of "The Conning Tower" in the *New York Tribune*. When Blake asked "Is there a third?" replies "rained in from every second post office" in the country, and he listed twenty-eight from large newspapers and small. W. B. Blake, "Colyums and Colyumists," *Collier's* 53 (16 May 1914): 26, 28.

16. "Colyums," *Saturday Review of Literature* 2 (15 August 1925): 37.

17. Benjamin A. Heydrick, "Journalism and Humor," *Chatauquan* 66 (March 1912): 52.

18. Monroe, 326–27. Karl E. Meyer, "The Forthright Estate," in his *Pundits, Poets and Wits* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), xi–xli, is an excellent overview of the American tradition of column writing. Chicago's columnists, including Keough, Ring Lardner, and Bert Leston Taylor, are treated on pages xxvii–xxxv. See also Kenny J. Williams and Bernard Duffy, *Chicago's Public Wits: A Chapter in the American Comic Spirit* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983).

themes, Thomas B. Connery has written, "make a statement, or provide an interpretation about the people and culture depicted."[19] Keough's talents were well-suited to the genre.

The turn of the century, too, was the period when the "straight American stuff" of baseball began to absorb ever more public attention, and big city newspapers like the *Tribune* devoted increasing amounts of space to the game.[20] The newspapers of Keough's Chicago were "unlike any printed anywhere else. They were written largely in the language that the wild growing young city understood. They had individuality," according to Hugh Fullerton, a premier baseball writer who would succeed Keough as conductor of the "Wake." "They were boisterous, at times rough; they lacked dignity, perhaps, but they were readable, entertaining and amusing."[21]

The sportswriters who worked for them "gave their talents and the newspaper space of their bosses to popularize the game and its players," Fullerton recalled. They wrote in an entertaining and amusing style that was significantly different from the spare reports of the 1870s and 1880s, which Fullerton criticized as being "about as readable as the market reports or the steamship movements." Readers of the new sportswriters, "laughing at the accounts of games and the doings of players, commenced to go to see for themselves. The style of reporting baseball changed all over the country." Newspapers in the western part of the country followed Chicago's lead, Fullerton wrote. "The East paid more attention to details and developed the experts, while the West turned to the amusing features of the sport." Soon, sportswriters were covering other sports in the same way. Boxing, college football, horse racing, tennis, golf and, as the new century developed, automobile racing—all found their way on to the sports pages.[22] It was just the right moment for Keough, with his "colyum's" special interpretation of sports—or, perhaps it is more accurate to say, of "every-day life" as seen through the perspective of sports.

Keough's column made its first appearance on Sunday, 3 July 1904, under the boxed heading "Sidelights on Sports." Elsewhere in the newspaper was speculation that the Japanese had successfully blockaded the Russian ports of Port Arthur and Vladivostok. Britain was nearing economic disaster. Democrats were assem-

19. Connery, *Sourcebook of Literary Journalism*, xiv. See also, Thomas B. Connery, "A Third Way to Tell the Story: American Literary Journalism at the Turn of the Century," in *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Norman Sims (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 4–5.

20. William H. Nugent, "The Sports Section," *American Mercury* 16 (March 1929): 336–37. For detailed discussion of the development of public interest in sports see John Rickards Betts, *America's Sporting Heritage: 1850–1950* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1974). See especially the chapter "Sporting Journalism and the Technological Revolution," 52–85.

21. Hugh Fullerton, "The Fellows Who Made the Game," *Saturday Evening Post* 200 (21 April 1928): 18.

22. Fullerton, "Fellows Who Made the Game," 19.

bling in St. Louis to choose a presidential candidate to oppose the incumbent, Theodore Roosevelt, whom the Republicans had endorsed in Chicago just ten days before. A front-page story warned of the dangers of fireworks, an annual *Tribune* concern. Just above it, a cartoon by John T. McCutcheon, who by then had left the *Record* for what would be a lustrous career on the *Tribune*, told the moralistic tale of "The Clerk Who Played the Races and Tried to Get Rich Quick."

The clerk who might have played the St. Louis Derby the previous day could read in the four-page sports section that English Lad had carried the day. He could also read that the Chicago White Sox, in third place in the American League, had beaten the St. Louis Browns on Saturday afternoon, but the Chicago Colts (later to be the Cubs), who held second place in the National League, had not played the day before. A group of thirty "automobilists," spending the holiday weekend touring Wisconsin had made it to Milwaukee in just ten hours and had enjoyed good night's sleep at the elegant Pfister Hotel. Another group, mapping a route between Chicago and St. Louis, had not had such good luck. Photographs showed most of the vehicles chugging through a deeply rutted roadway, though one was sunk in a mud hole.

"Sidelights on Sports" appeared alongside two standing columns in the sports section. "The Referee," which gave what the editors described in a subhead as "Brief Opinions on Happenings in the Athletic World," stood in the first column of the first page of the sports section. On another page, George Siler brought boxing fans up to date in "Siler's Talk of the Ring."

The new column appeared again the following week, but under a different heading, "Some Offside Plays." Then, for some inexplicable reason, it did not appear at all in the issue of 17 July. When "Some Offside Plays" returned on 24 July, Keough began it simply, "Well, as we were about to say—," but he had no explanation for his absence the previous week.

Keough freelanced "Some Offside Plays" to the *Tribune* for two years, until 1906, when he was hired on full-time to write "Some Offside Plays," general sports, and a Sunday feature on horse racing and the people who made the sport.[23] In the midst of the 1907 baseball season, he added the writing of "In the Wake of the News" to his duties. The Cubs in that season, led by the celebrated double-play combination of Joe Tinker, Johnny Evers, and Frank Chance were on their way to winning 107 games, the National League championship, and the World Series. The White Sox, who had beaten the Cubs in the World Series the year before, were again in

23. A sampling of the features includes "Touts of the Old Days" (7 January 1906), "The Day the Dopester Won" (10 June 1906), and "New Foibles of Race Track and Paddock" (30 September 1906). He had written similar features occasionally for the *Chicago Times* fifteen years earlier over the playful pseudonym, "Hyder All"; e.g., 15 February, 8 March 1891.

first place, where they stayed long enough to tease fans into thoughts of another intra-city series before Ty Cobb led the Detroit Tigers spikes up into the league championship. The "Wake" was part of the *Tribune*'s response to the demand of the city's baseball fans for more news about their heroes.

Why the different name, and how did it come to be? Keough did not say; the "Wake" simply appeared, with no announcement or explanation. Years later, Arch Ward, a subsequent conductor of the "Wake," told his readers that the name was suggested to Keough by Harry Groves, a long-time station agent at the Forty-Third Street depot of the Illinois Central Railroad, just a short walk from Keough's home.[24]

The staple of the "Wake" was the single paragraph comment on the sports news of the day, nearly always with a humorous twist. Each paragraph was set off by a typographical ornament before and after, and there was no coherence between them, though Keough might occasionally return to a point after several paragraphs to set down an afterthought. The form was not new. It had long been a handy convention of newspapers, as Keough knew. It allowed editors to provide readers a great many items of secondary importance in bulletin fashion. Even advertising notices were woven in from time to time. Keough simply adapted it to his own purposes, as did other newspaper humorists.[25] A sampling illustrates his technique:

> The cheerful press agent announces a balloon race between Prof. De Razzi and Mlle. Vermicelli to take place July 4 and predicts that "considerable money will change hands on the result." The probable outcome is up in the air.[26]
>
> -•-
>
> One should not take on polo until one can point with pride back to three generations of terrapin stew.[27]
>
> -•-
>
> "White Sox get revenge," said the headline. Then

24. Arch Ward, "In the Wake of the News," *Chicago Tribune* Archive, Ward file, n.d.

25. Leon Nelson Flint, *The Editorial: A Study in Effectiveness of Writing* (New York: D. Appleton, 1923), devoted a chapter to "Paragraphs and Paragraphers," in which he listed twenty-two formulas employed by paragraphers, all of which Keough employed: exaggeration, understatement, the incongruous, puns, metaphor, aphorism, modified quotation, homily, distorted proverbs, ironical explanation, paradox, innuendo, human nature ("the paragraph that 'shows us up' as we are"), satire at institutions and conventions, isolated syllable, epigram, historical allusion, oddities, peculiar work, literary allusion, Frankenstein ("an imaginary type-character through whom the editor impresses characteristic sentiments"), and headline form (190–97). Frank M. O'Brien, a practitioner, included also verse: "Limerick, triolet, quatrain, or plain jingle." O'Brien, "The Confessions of a Paragrapher," *Munsey's* 53 (January 1915): 749–52.

26. *Chicago Tribune*, 3 July 1904.

27. *Chicago Tribune*, 21 August 1904.

followed the story of how Comiskey's team made Washington lose its eighty-sixth game. Revenge like that may be sweet, but to a man on a telegraph pole it looks like cruelty to animals."[28]

-•-

Jack Chesbro, who is credited with having brought the spit ball to its highest power of destructiveness, is experimenting with a new puzzler. "It is really," he says, "three balls in one." It must make a noise like a pawn ticket.[29]

-•-

Whom the gods would have fun with they have horses named for.[30]

-•-

Washington was first in war and first in peace, but stands a might slim chance of being as good as fifth in the American league.[31]

-•-

The race is not always to the swift, but when it isn't it behooves the judges to see which jockey is friendly with the bookmakers.[32]

Keough was also a versifier, and for many of his columns he dashed off a piece of light verse with seeming ease. Some of his poems were easily dismissed; others were the kind readers might clip and tack on a wall or carry in a wallet. Consider, for example, his New Year's wish to his readers in 1909:

O, Father Time, who keeps the tab
And scores the passing year
And springs the barrier upon
The one that's coming here.
We ask you with a contrite heart
To make the one you've sent
A little mite more cheerful
Than the one that's gone and went.
Amen.[33]

Some of his verses were widely reprinted, especially "The Lay of the Hospital Race," a minor epic about a fixed steeplechase, which he told in forty-two quatrains.[34] Woodruff called it "the greatest bit of sporting humor and satire I ever have read."[35] When "the other Chooey," as Keough sometimes referred to Hugh Fullerton, compiled a memorial collection of Keough's work, he included prima-

28. *Chicago Tribune*, 4 September 1904.
29. *Chicago Tribune*, 7 May 1905.
30. *Chicago Tribune*, 7 January 1906.
31. *Chicago Tribune*, 29 April 1906.
32. *Chicago Tribune*, 17 January 1913.
33. *Chicago Tribune*, 1 January 1909.
34. *Chicago Tribune*, 6 May 1906.
35. Galley proof, "Galley Number Sixteen—History—Number Twenty-One," unpublished, *Chicago Tribune* Archive, 1942.

rily the verse, which he called "classics in the language that men understand."[36]

A continuing feature of both "Some Offside Plays" and "In the Wake of the News" was an occasional listing of responses to letters, real and fanciful, sent to him by readers and headed variously "First Aid to the Injured," "The Editor's Vest," "The Editor's Weskit," and "Pay Off On These."

> G. W.: No, we do not agree with you when you say that "if one's horse is left at the post one should get one's money back." After long experience turf authorities have agreed that such a provision in the rules of racing would be subject to abuse. For example, if two's horse were left at the post two might insist on getting his money back twice.[37]
>
> -•-
>
> H. P. C.—Glad to get it. Read it a long time ago when it was first published.[38]
>
> -•-
>
> B. L.—If you accidentally get a peek at your opponent's hole card you are permitted to make the most of your opportunity, but you should do it with a look of seeming unconsciousness.[39]

Such a feature had appeared in the pages of the *Sporting and Theatrical Journal* not long after Keough joined it twenty years earlier and in the *Chicago Times* during his tenure there.[40] Whether his invention or not, he used it to good effect throughout his editorship of the Tribune column.

After writing the "Wake" for a year and a half, Keough began including contributions from readers in the column, as Taylor had with the "Line." At the end of 1908, after printing some "suggested wheezes from A Reader in Hillsdale, Mich," he added a paragraph of encouragement to others: "Far be it from us to turn down anything that looks comely to the gentleman who springs it. We don't know what the reader may think about it, but it is just such contributions of condiment that make the daily quail digestible."[41]

To readers, contributors and Keough, the contributions were, indeed, digestible, and as time passed they appeared with greater frequency, especially on Sundays. They included aphorisms, jokes, and short verses, and they came from such varied locations as St. Louis; Monroe, Louisiana; Arcadia, Michigan; and Vancouver, British Columbia. On occasion, Keough edited the offerings, which sometimes brought complaints. "Barker," for

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36. *"By HEK": In the Wake of the News, A Collection of the Writings of the Late Hugh Edmund Keough*, comp. and ed. Hugh S. Fullerton (Chicago: Regan, 1912), 5.
37. *Chicago Tribune*, 10 July 1904.
38. *Chicago Tribune*, 3 March 1912.
39. *Chicago Tribune*, 23 February 1908.
40. For example, see 1884 issues of *Sporting and Theatrical Journal*.
41. *Chicago Tribune*, 30 December 1908.

example, took him to poetic task for "making my hair turn gray / With a word left out and a word put in" one poem and a whole verse cut from another. Keough published the complaint with the note: "Wonder if the publication of this 'un just as she's wrote will win him back."[42] One can only imagine how many submissions he received like one "message of grave import. The only thing we can make out of it is the supposition that it must have been written with a borrowed fountain pen down at the far end of the mahogany just before closing time or shortly after."[43]

The contributors filled many "Wake" inches as time went on, whether with acceptances or rejections. He did not print a verse submitted by one J. B. C. for the reason that it was "rather trickful, but you can't make 'venture' rhyme with 'debentures' in these parts. We may be somewhat shy on the afflatus, but we sit up nights to protect the mechanics of verse making." Under the subhead "WHY ¶ERS BECOME PEEVED," he expressed himself with uncharacteristic sharpness to another contributor:

> Here's a sweet wood violet who writes to the head of the department thus: "If either or both of the following are worth the space you can stick them in Hek's column Sunday." Just for that we absobloodylutely refuse to even look at "either or both of the following." So there. They are now jammed so tight in the bottom of the wastebasket that the charlady will have to use hooks to get 'em out.[44]

He had a stable of alter egos who contributed under pseudonyms. Many of them he "gathered and enshrined under this roundtop" to help him cover the 1910 World Series. They included T. Hellyer Seigh, who wrote in a Cockney dialect, Richard le Gasoline, who contributed verse, Dr. Normal Bean, Izzy Ham, Chippewa Conneau, and A. Body Wildoo.[45]

Keough had an unerring eye for the wordy and pompous in the writing of others—especially his fellow sportswriters. He delighted in picking the overblown phrase or absurd synonym out of a story and holding it up for public ridicule, and he found a mother lode in baseball stories. On the eve of the opening of the 1906 baseball season, for example, he predicted:

> It is the same now as it was fifteen years ago and will be fifteen years hence. The baseball scribe, with his wits and his pencil sharpened at both ends, takes a day off to think up a striking sentence with which to open the baseball season. He eventually lands on this:
>
> PLAYBALL!!
>
> Then he goes upstairs and camps on the foreman's hip until he sees it set in a box with a lot of "spinach"

42. *Chicago Tribune*, 8 April 1911.
43. *Chicago Tribune*, 15 January 1909.
44. *Chicago Tribune*, 8 April 1911.
45. *Chicago Tribune*, 13 October 1910.

around it. It is an original idea with him and he wants to make sure it is tastefully displayed.

When he takes a slant through the exchanges he accuses forty-five or fifty of his conferees of plagiarism.[46]

Looking at the calendar at the start of 1911, he found "that the opportunity to preface the baseball story with those immortal words, 'This being Friday the thirteenth,' will be furnished only once during the baseball season this year." He asked his readers, "Do you remember how you used to watch for that beautiful, compelling thought and speculated on how many baseball scribes in the range of your reading would evince enough originality to pass it up for once?"[47]

Keough obviously relished recounting a spring training story on the play of a batter who "woppled up to the nappy and laying his trusty truncheon violently against a spheroidus expectorus laid one down in the south parterre which the guardian of that territory failed to negotiate; that he then swiped the secondary satchel, helped himself to the tertiary valise, and came galumphing home on another player's kawassis to profound center."[48] In another year, he noted ironically that "the slang term 'pitcher' is becoming quite possible as a substitute for slabman, hurler, flinger, and the obsolete boxman, and that the word 'catcher,' which was regarded as a solecism a few seasons back, sometimes butts into polite society as a synonym for wind paddist, foul devourer, and big mitt artist. An attempt may be made as the season advances to fasten the stigma of first baseman on the initial sacker, but that is considered rather daring just now."[49] Perhaps his best comment on the subject came in a verse he called "Song of the Baseball Now":

There's the hurler and the twirler
And the flinger and slinger
And the positive persquizzle of the battery and sich:
There's the boxman and the slabman,
The projector, the deflector,
And a score of other synonyms for him who makes the pitch.

In the chaste vocabulary
Of the gent who's wise and wary
There's no outré expression that can't be made to fit.
He can deal in occult jargon,
Fling Sanscrit in the bargain
When he smears the soothing substance on the guy that does the hit.

46. *Chicago Tribune*, 15 April 1906.
47. *Chicago Tribune*, 3 January 1911.
48. *Chicago Tribune*, 17 March 1907.
49. *Chicago Tribune*, 5 February 1908.

He's required to slop and sozzle,
Or take Webster by the nozzle
And lead him into alleyways he never saw before.
If he can't invent a jingle
That will mesh with bunt or bingle
He is hopelessly ferninst it when he comes to do the score.

The pace is getting warmer
For the baseballing brain stormer.
If he cannot be a bell cow he must tag along behind.
If he's not there with the shimmer
There are dust spots on his glimmer
And he slides into the slough trap with the ordinary kind.

If it isn't in his bony,
If he has to stand alone, he—
Must be content to wallow with the ordinary sweat;
If he's not imaginative,
Or leastwise imitative
He receives the withering congé with the editor's regrets.[50]

From time to time, Keough would use a simple word in an item, then define it with one less simple:

Usually Fielder Jones [manager of the White Sox] does not begin* to worry until the middle of July.

*Slang for "commence."[51]

He might also seize on a word he thought overused, as in 1905 when he informed readers he had "leased the running qualities of this word 'banal' with all of its derivatives for 15 days, beginning with this issue. If your newsdealer doesn't handle it, shake a tree." In subsequent columns he used the word time and again, referring to it again in racing terms. He had it "entered three times in what we considered soft spóts. Twice we scratched him on account of the bad going and the next time we took him out because the churlish secretary put him in the hard end of the split."[52]

If Keough could poke fun at sportswriters, he could also use their language to good advantage outside the sports arena. As he did in dealing with "banal," he drew on the patois of the racetrack to put the Democrats' 1904 nominating convention in horse racing terms. The nomination "was a shoo in for Parker. Hearst ran his race in his work and stopped to nothing after going a quarter. Bryan appeared to have gone stale and sour. Cleveland did not try a yard. He did not like the going. Hill put up a perfect ride on the

50. *Chicago Tribune*, 17 March 1907.
51. *Chicago Tribune*, 3 May 1908.
52. *Chicago Tribune*, 5, 22 May 1908.

winner."[53] When Keough handicapped the competition for the Republican nomination in 1908, he reported to his readers that he was "more than ever inclined to fancy Taft." Charles W. Fairbanks "strikes us as being a bit too much on the leg to go a route. . . . [Joseph] Cannon seems to have been over trained. The others may be marked with an asterisk. Taft will be a short price, of course, but we strongly advise you to go to him or keep off the race altogether."[54] When Theodore Roosevelt decided to seek the Republican nomination in 1912, a "Wake" item reported: "Flash! take the release off T. R.'s entry in the Presidential handicap and make him 2 to 5."[55]

Keough tuned his ear to the language of the street, too, and he frequently provided his readers snatches of conversations he claimed to have overheard. Among them was one "overheard in the foyer":

> "Some actor, hey?"
> "Some actor is right."
> "Got 'em all goin'."
> "You said something."
> "Yes, indeed; some actor."
> "Believe me."
> "You said a mouthful."
> "See the flowers? Some flowers, hey?"
> "Some flowers is right."
> "Should say—cost sixty."
> "Grand little fellow—do you know him?"
> "Should say so. Rode home in the same car with him twice last summer." [56]

In similar vein, he provided a conversation from "Bayou la Bite, La.":

> "Catcheinem?"
> "Helno!"
> "'Smatter?"
> "Tide."[57]

Keough spiced the column with his own peculiar slang. Eyes were "lamps," and readers were "lampers." By extension, the Three-I baseball league (for Iowa, Illinois and Indiana) was the "Three-Lamp League." To be "Joseph" or "Jerry" to something was to aware of it, to be on to it, as in "We are Joseph, old fellow—the secret is out," or "Dan et al.: Aren't you Jerry to the ethics of the establishment?"[58] "Bally" was an all purpose adjective used for emphasis. A "wheeze," he explained to a questioner, "bears the same relation to a 'gag' that a snore does to a hiccough."[59]

53. *Chicago Tribune*, 10 July 1904.
54. *Chicago Tribune*, 8 June 1908.
55. *Chicago Tribune*, 27 February 1912.
56. *Chicago Tribune*, 26 January 1912.
57. *Chicago Tribune*, 27 November 1910.
58. *Chicago Tribune*, 24 July 1909.
59. *Chicago Tribune*, 31 March 1908.

The telephone is a constant interruption in any newspaper office, and for Keough, trying to turn out a daily column, the interruptions were particularly vexing. But they also provided fodder for the column. The day after the Cubs played off a tie game to win the National League championship in 1908, Keough reported that "the dutiful day watch [as he styled himself in the role of telephone answerer] is now at liberty to answer all of the 40,000 questions that were shot at him over the telephone yesterday."[60] In the autumn of 1910, he warned readers that no one at the *Tribune* knew how fans could get tickets for the World Series. "When news of that nature comes across it is printed and not held out for telephonic circulation. Not making anybody a short answer, of course."[61] At the beginning of the 1912 baseball season, he complained in advance that "if fans would familiarize themselves with the schedules and take a common sense view of the existing weather they would save a lot of jitneys that now go to swell the dividends of the telephone company."[62] More often, Keough provided the dialogue of conversations and, on occasion, showed what the callers interrupted:

> When you hear the ticker ticking
> And the telephone bell ringing,
> And the muckers crab the flowing of your pen—
> Ting-a-ling—Sporting department?
> D. W.—Yes.
> Ting-a-ling—Is the gentleman who is writing about the tennis tournament there?
> D. W.—Evidently not.
> Ting-a-ling—Can you tell me what time that match is to be pulled off this afternoon?
> D. W.—Horrors! Lawn tennis matches are not pulled off; they transpire.
> Ting-a-ling—Well, when does it?
> D. W.—I don't know.
> Then you realize instanter,
> As you blow your train of thought,
> It is lovely to get back to work again.[63]

On special occasions, Keough revised the heading of the column. During the 1908 World Series, which he was assigned to cover as "the scenes and incidents kid in this baseball anticlimax," the "Wake" appeared as "In the Wake of the Second Blow Administered by Cubs," "In the Wake of the Game That Went" and "In the Wake of Blow No. 3 Landed by Cubs."[64] During the following year's World Series, the heading read variously "Awake With the News," "In the Wake of the Second Jolt," "In the Wake of the Jolt

60. *Chicago Tribune*, 9 October 1908.
61. *Chicago Tribune*, 7 October 1910.
62. *Chicago Tribune*, 23 April 1912.
63. *Chicago Tribune*, 19 July 1910.
64. *Chicago Tribune*, 12, 13, 14 October 1908.

and a Half," "In the Wake of the What," and "In the Wake of the Blow."[65] For days on which the game was postponed, the head was "In the Wake of the Let Up" and "In the Wake of an Off Day."[66]

Some of the more entertaining items were those in which Keough and Bert Leston Taylor, whom Keough styled "Our Colleague on the Highbrow Page," chatted with each other column to column. Taylor led one "A Line-O'-Type or Two" verse with the note, "The late Mr. Swinburne declared that nothing should be written in verse that could be expressed in prose."[67] Keough wisecracked in the "Wake," "B.L.T.: You told us something. We were under the impression Swinburne put it away in verse because he couldn't get anybody to stand for it in prose."[68] Taylor's response the next day was a verse addressed, "O singer of the track and ring." In it he celebrated "The gay Heksameters you fling," which he found sometimes "sweet as note of wren," and sometimes "pungent, with a sting / of sauce tabasco or cayenne." Taylor also noted Keough's propensity to "sling the slang that's slung—but spring / A new one every now and then."[69] To that, Keough could only reply, "Thanks, shopmate, thanks. There aren't no bally word for it."[70]

In April 1910, Taylor put tongue in cheek of "A Line-O'-Type or Two" to tell aspiring humorists that they needed to "carry a side line of sorrow" if they were to be considered literary. "The belled cap may earn a man applause during his hour upon the stage, but what will it get him in the Posterity Handicap?—as HEK might inquire."[71] Keough replied the next day in a verse in which he told Taylor, "you've hit it right," and concluded: "If all your life you've joked / You are passed up when you're croaked. / If you'd make your name enduring make 'em cry."[72]

Taylor also took note of Keough's reporting of the 1910 World Series, which the Cubs lost to the Philadelphia A's: "As usual, Old Dr. Hek provides the most scientific and searching diagnosis. Unlike Mr. Hoffman, Mr. Evers, and the rest, Old Dr. Hek doesn't let baseball interfere with his newspaper work." Keough replied in the "Wake" of the next day: "Thanks, old top on the floor above. You have given us credit for the only thing we assume—sporting sense."[73] (Months later, Keough printed a bit of doggerel from a reader of both columns who asked: "What kind of doctor, pray?" Keough's answer was in the subhead above it: "HE MEANS A VETERINARY, PROBABLY.")[74]

65. *Chicago Tribune*, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15 October 1909.
66. *Chicago Tribune*, 12, 13 October 1909.
67. *Chicago Tribune*, 22 July 1909.
68. *Chicago Tribune*, 23 July 1909.
69. *Chicago Tribune*, 24 July 1909.
70. *Chicago Tribune*, 25 July 1909.
71. *Chicago Tribune*, 23 April 1910.
72. *Chicago Tribune*, 24 April 1910.
73. *Chicago Tribune*, 22, 23 October 1910.
74. *Chicago Tribune*, 3 February 1911.

In his column for Christmas Eve 1910, Taylor carried a boxed announcement: "In accordance with our immemorial custom of giving our readers a Christmas holiday, when it falls on Sunday, the Line-o'-Type will not be published tomorrow." The joke, Keough and other regular readers knew, was that A Line-o'-Type or Two never appeared on Sundays. On Christmas morning, Keough's column also carried a boxed announcement: "AND in accordance with OUR immemorial custom to give OUR readers a day to cool out when Christmas falls on Sunday there will be nothing doing In the Wake of the News tomorrow," when, of course, the "Wake" would normally not appear. Keough appended a "Note to makeup: Please return box to Line-o'-Type galley."

For the most part, Keough was successful in hiding the fact that he took himself at all seriously. But he did use the column at times to speak straightforwardly of sports issues. He opposed night baseball when the subject came up for discussion in 1909.[75] Basketball was his "dominant notion of nothing to professionalize."[76] And he frequently argued that it was foolish to try to impose amateur status on collegiate athletes.[77] He judged that "the only development that has been made in the prize fighting industry since we used to go in for it with an enthusiasm worthier of a greater thirst has been in the management and publicity departments."[78] He held up the hypocrisy of organized baseball, which "discredits, repudiates, and, to the extent of its power, discourages betting on its games," while nevertheless realizing that "its contests are being made the medium of an organized and systematized form of wagering."[79] And he took issue with baseball owners who "always rise in their places at banquets and such to express their gratitude to the "public press" for what it has done and is doing for the national game. But when an integral part of the "public press" goes to the pains of getting to the root of an an engaging proposition they call it 'newspaper talk.'"[80]

Keough spoke up for blacks at a time when few others in his position did. He took on the popular Detroit star Ty Cobb when Cobb punched a black laborer in the face and urged in print that Cobb "remember that the war has been over some time. If he wants to settle the Negro problem let him settle it, but this is neither the time nor the place."[81] He was a staunch supporter of Jack Johnson, the black prizefighter who became the heavyweight champion. Not long after Johnson won the crown, Keough commented on what he saw as two phases of what he called "negrophobia." Heavyweight Jim Jeffries, he wrote,

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75. *Chicago Tribune*, 22 June 1909.
76. *Chicago Tribune*, 28 February 1912.
77. *Chicago Tribune*, 18 September 1908, 28 November 1909.
78. *Chicago Tribune*, 4 December 1904.
79. *Chicago Tribune*, 1 August 1908.
80. *Chicago Tribune*, 24 February 1909.
81. *Chicago Tribune*, 10 June 1908. See also column of 21 June 1908.

> would like to squelch Johnson with a right to the jaw and [Stanley] Ketchel would like to squelch him by refusing to breathe the same atmosphere. And both in the same spirit. Pugilistic ethics is a wonderful study.
>
> A few of us who have never dug into it deeply have been daffy enough to suppose that a saddle-hued fighter was just as good as a pink-hued prize fighter, everything else being equal.[82]

The next day, he pointed out that "a partial explanation" for the fact that Johnson was the first black to become champion "is that he is the first good colored heavyweight that was ever given a chance."[83] He underlined that point with a ten-stanza verse in which he argued that Peter Jackson could have been champion "If they vouchsafed that colored man a try."[84] But when it was reported that Johnson was a bigamist ("A pugilistic champion's fame is not complete until he has broken into the society column," Keough observed[85]), the boxer got his comeuppance with a racist edge. Johnson did not see "why he should be bothered with one or two kinky complications," Keough wrote. "That is, of course, the colored man's privilege."[86] When a question arose about the race of one of Johnson's wives, Keough wrote, "we take it that it is just as embarrassing for a colored person to be accused of being white as it is for a white person to be accused of having a stroke of the tar brush."[87]

His jabs at Johnson prompted a Black reader to ask "if it is on account of Johnson's color or his profession that we occasionally take a rise out of him." Keough responded, "We hasten to assure him that it simply is the profession and the exigencies appertaining thereto. It's the game, not those who play it. All pugilists look alike to this pair of lamps. . . . We measure Jack Johnson as a prizefighter just as we measured Isaac Murphy as a jockey."[88] He measured others the same way. Whether Johnson or John J. McGraw, manager of the New York Giants, whom he disliked, or Charles Comiskey, owner of the Chicago White Sox, whom he liked, any sportsman from any sport could become a potential target for Keough's usually gentle but pointed skewering.

Keough built an appreciative audience and gained a measure of fame. Early in 1912 he received a letter from a reader in Rochester, New York, who told him, "If anyone can get 'em without a full address you ought to." The envelope it came in was directed to only "The Wake, W.G.N. [for World's Greatest Newspaper, as the *Tribune* unblushingly referred to itself for many years], Chicago."

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82. *Chicago Tribune*, 25 December 1908.
83. *Chicago Tribune*, 26 December 1908.
84. *Chicago Tribune*, 29 December 1908.
85. *Chicago Tribune*, 22 January 1909.
86. *Chicago Tribune*, 27 January 1909.
87. *Chicago Tribune*, 21 March 1909.
88. *Chicago Tribune*, 24 July 1909.

Keough reported that "it came as straight as if shot through a tube."[89] Writers for other newspapers also read his column faithfully, and now and then one moved from admiration to plagiarism. When that happened and Keough found out about it, he exposed the transgressor publicly. "One feels that one's life has not been in vain when one sees one of one's careless six line paragraphs reprinted under a thirty-six point head in the Indianapolis News credited to the St. Louis Globe Democrat," he complained on one occasion.[90] Others singled out when he caught their fingers in the "Wake's" till included "the gent who does the light and airy for the Buffalo Evening Times," "the sporting feuilletonist of the St. Louis Chronicle," whose "flattery amounts almost to idolatry, inasmuch as he takes it blood raw and attaches his monicker to it," and "the Sporting News, published in St. Louis, Mo.," for which, he had been told "by vigilant Wake lampers here and there . . . we, unknowingly, are doing considerable work."[91] He frequently chided one "Bill Bailey," "the gent who edits 'the best sporting section in the south' for the otherwise esteemed Washington Herald," but found there was no way "to reach the conscience of that larcenous person"; time and again, Bailey went at the "Wake" with "his brazen shears and his soulless paste pot."[92] For all of those who had taken from the "Wake" and "Some Offside Plays" over the years Keough composed a verse under the heading "All the News of the Sporting World Compiled by Experts" and subtitled "'Some Offside Dips,' by Pasty McShears."

An illustrated expert me,
With quite a reputation;
I cop the bright things that I see
With nary trepidation.

Without a pang I clip and paste,
And never think of crediting,
And nothing clever goes to waste
When I am sporting editing.

What care I for the guy that's had
The labor of producing it?
I pay him, which is not so bad,
The compliment of using it.

My readers seldom see the source
Of all the stuff I shuffle up.
If one of them suspects, of course,
That is my cue to ruffle up.

89. *Chicago Tribune*, 25 January 1912.
90. *Chicago Tribune*, 9 December 1906.
91. *Chicago Tribune*, 17 September 1907, 21 March 1908, 27 March 1912.
92. *Chicago Tribune*, 12 December 1909 and 2, 4 January 1910.

And should the man who writes it roar,
I'll write him, high-class-journally,
And say, "Old pal, there, don't get sore,"
And sign it "Yours fraternally."[93]

Keough showed a more sentimental side in including a memorial paragraph or verse in honor of someone recently dead. He wished "peace to the ashes of Capt. Billy Williamson. May the birds sing sweetly over his grave in old Mobile."[94] When the billiards champion Jake Schaefer died, he noted that it was not "Schaefer's habit to take notice of the number of points on his opponent's string. He played his own game and he played it out."[95] Grover Cleveland he eulogized as "a sportsman of the gentler sort."[96] Of Edward VII of England he wrote that all of the encomiums heaped upon the monarch did not "truly ring / Like these: 'He was a sportsman, a gentleman, a king.'"[97] He gave his friend and colleague George Siler praise any journalist would cherish: "We shall miss nothing in the way of news, but we shall miss the way in which it was told."[98] The death of his close friend Charles F. Spalding inspired a short poem that was widely reprinted:

Let's lay aside the lighter thought
And pause a little while;
Let's give voice to feelings pent—
Let tears usurp the smile.
Let grief reign where the laughter was,
And let us cease to doubt
That friendship lies beyond the grave—
A good old pal's gone out.[99]

In the spring of 1912, Keough fell ill. He began having difficulty swallowing. He wrote his last "Wake" for the issue of 25 April 1912. It consisted of only a three-stanza verse headed "STICK AROUND. WILL BE BACK SHORTLY," in which he told his readers that his doctor had advised an operation lest his condition worsen. But he assured them

There is not a chance to lose us—
Never fear!
We'll be here or on the way
Mostly every other day
And we'll still be drawing pay—
Make that clear.

He missed two subsequent Sunday editions, but managed one

93. *Chicago Tribune*, 18 December 1910.
94. *Chicago Tribune*, 16 December 1906.
95. *Chicago Tribune*, 9 March 1910. When he was writing the column, Hugh Fullerton reported that Keough had once told him that he intended to make a semi-annual inquiry, "What has become of the monument to Jake Schaefer?" So Fullerton asked the question for him. *Chicago Tribune*, 30 October 1912.
96. *Chicago Tribune*, 26 June 1908.
97. *Chicago Tribune*, 8 May 1910.
98. *Chicago Tribune*, 18 June 1908.
99. *Chicago Tribune*, 28 October 1909.

more "Some Offside Plays" for the Sunday newspaper of 12 May 1912. It would be his last full column. In the sports section of 19 May a final public paragraph appeared under the heading "A Sure Offside Play": "The pen may be mightier than the sword, but it has been put up to us good and strong that when you want to guess at the root of what ails, the chiv is mightier than the prescription. That's the gig we are just about to play. Root for us." Keough was operated on again, and while recovering at home he developed embolic pneumonia. He died on 9 June 1912.

Sports editor Harvey Woodruff wrote Keough's obituary and put it at the top of the first column of the sports page the following day. He included in it the memorial verse Keough had written in honor of Charles Spalding. The Associated Press sent the obituary out on the wire. Other newspapers reprinted it.[100] The *Tribune*'s sports cartoonist, Clare Briggs, drew Keough's rolltop desk and empty chair, and propped against the desk a wreath tied with a ribbon labeled "Hughey." A typewriter on the desk top held a sheet of paper with the words "The Wake of the News, by Hek." The cartoon was headed, "A Good Old Pal's Gone Out."[101]

An estimated five hundred of Keough's colleagues, sources, and readers attended his funeral mass at Holy Angels Church and saw him buried at Oakwoods Cemetery.[102] Others sat down to write appreciations. Readers across the country filled a column of remembrances in the *Tribune*, and the memorials that were printed were but a fraction of the letters and telegrams that were sent to the newspaper and to his widow, Bertha Keough.[103] A month later, about thirty-five hundred persons filled Chicago's Colonial and Garrick theaters for a memorial benefit program for Mrs. Keough that featured many of the most popular sports figures and vaudeville performers of the day, including Jack Johnson.[104] The response was a measure of the regard that Keough had won from his readers; his impact on them was such that they felt they had come to know him, and like an obituary writer for the *Peoria Herald-Transcript*, they felt "a deep sense of personal loss in the passing of this unique and gifted contributor to the world's happiness."[105]

Sixteen years later, Woodruff—by then, conductor of the "Wake" himself—eulogized his friend anew in the *Tribune*'s house organ, *The Trib*. He called Keough "the greatest sports columnist of all time." In his columns, Woodruff wrote, Keough "could be vitriolic or tender, he could be subtle or obvious, he could write verse or prose. Keough's greatest forte, in my opinion, were his subtle shafts of wit, often so subtle they were over the heads of a majority

100. *Chicago Tribune*, 10 June 1912. Among the newspapers reprinting the obituary, in whole or in part, were *Atlanta Constitution*, *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, *New Orleans Item*, and *Lake County Times*.
101. *Chicago Tribune*, 11 June 1912.
102. *Chicago Tribune*, 12 June 1912; *Chicago Record-Herald*, 12 June 1912.
103. *Chicago Tribune*, 16 June 1912.
104. *Chicago Tribune*, 22 July 1912.
105. *Chicago Tribune*, 16 June 1912.

of his readers."[106] The formula had made the column "the most brilliant feature of the *Tribune*'s sport section," according to Donald Elder, Ring Lardner's biographer.[107]

"Some Offside Plays" died with Keough. But as a memorial to him, and no doubt in recognition of the column's wide following, *Tribune* editors decided to keep the name "In the Wake of the News." The job of writing it was given to Fullerton, who, despite his own stature as a sportswriter, confessed that "batting for HEK one feels as did the bush leaguer who was sent to bat for Cobb with the bases filled and two out."[108] Fullerton also took on the task of editing the volume of Keough's work, and in the process, he said, "one is left in doubt as to whether one ought to steal or resign."[109] The book, covered in brown velvet and bound with a ribbon, was published in mid-November 1912, and Fullerton told his readers "if you notice any improvement in this col. charge it to inspiration" derived from re-reading Keough.[110]

As fine and prolific a writer as he was, Fullerton apparently was not well-suited to writing a daily column, and within a year Ring Lardner took it over. Lardner, who had once covered baseball for the *Tribune*, was writing for the *Examiner*. The chance to edit the "Wake" lured him back.[111] He took over in early June, and the next week, on the anniversary of Keough's death, mourned anew with his readers, "We like our job, but would gladly pass it up to have him back."[112] (Lardner was said to have had some misgivings about moving into Keough's job, and the new proprietor suffered by comparison to Keough, at least in his first weeks. Readers told him in stacks of letters in the beginning that he was doing a terrible job, and one day he overheard a copy editor asking, "Does he think he's as good as Keough?")[113]

Lardner, of course, overcame any questions about his fitness to write the "Wake," and he won fame as its proprietor.[114] In 1919, looking for a larger audience, Lardner struck out for New York, and his place was taken for a few months by Jack Lait, later to churn out a series of books on his investigations of organized crime (*Inside U.S.A.*, *Inside Chicago*, etc.). Harvey T. Woodruff, who had been sports editor, took on the column in late 1919 and wrote it until 1937. He was succeeded by Arch Ward, whose by-line was attached to the "Wake" until his death in 1956, but who often assigned younger men on the staff to write it for him.[115] One of those,

106. *Trib* 9 (February 1928): 6.
107. Donald Elder, *Ring Lardner* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), 94.
108. *Chicago Tribune*, 14 July 1912.
109. *Chicago Tribune*, 22 October 1912.
110. *Chicago Tribune*, 17 November 1912.
111. Jonathan Yardley, *Ring: A Biography of Ring Lardner* (New York: Random, 1977), 108, 142.
112. *Chicago Tribune*, 10 June 1913.
113. *New York Times*, 26 September 1933; Elder, *Ring Lardner*, 95.
114. Lardner's proprietorship of the column is detailed well in a chapter in Yardley, *Ring: A Biography*, 151–218.
115. Jerome Holtzman, *No Cheering in the Press Box* (New York: Holt Rinehart

David Condon, was given the column on Ward's death, and he continued the "Wake" until his retirement in 1982.[116] Since then, it has been conducted on a rotating basis. Bob Verdi shared it after Condon's retirement with John Husar; Steve Daley was added to the rotation, then Bernie Lincicome. Husar and Daley are gone now, and only Verdi and Lincicome write it.

Each of the conductors to follow Keough has been among the finest of the *Tribune*'s writers over the years, and each has brought the style of his own personality to the "Wake." Red Smith paid tribute to Keough, Fullerton, and Lardner in a column on his predecessor sportswriters. He referred to Lardner as a "platinum-penned scribbler," and Keough and Fullerton as being among a small group of "perceptive reporters brightening the sports pages with scholarship and wit."[117] But it was obvious through Condon's proprietorship that each owed a debt to Keough. Each employed many of the conventions he established, including the humorous paragraph, serious comment, imaginary conversations, and verse. Each used contributors to excellent advantage. Verdi and Lincicome would seem to owe little or nothing to their predecessors; their "Wake" presents not a variety of material, but consists, generally, of only one topic, much the same as sports page columns in other metropolitan newspapers. When Lincicome was profiled not long ago in *Chicago* magazine, no mention was made of his column's title.[118]

Blending as they have the journalistic and the literary over the years, the proprietors of "In the Wake of the News" have put the column squarely in the tradition of literary journalism. No matter the form or the content of the column, however, most important to its readers is that it is there in the sports section each morning as it has been for eighty-five years, and the name still stands as tribute to the man who established it, by Hek.

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and Winston, 1973), 140. Mention of Ward's proprietorship of the column is contained, *passim.*, in Thomas B. Littlewood, *Arch: A Promoter, Not a Poet; The Story of Arch Ward* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990) .

116. Holtzman, *No Cheering*, 143, 161. *Tribune* columnist Bill Granger provided a deservedly warm assessment of Condon as "Wake" conductor on the latter's retirement. *Chicago Tribune*, 28 October 1982.

117. Ira Berkow, *Red: A Biography of Red Smith; The Life and Times of a Great American Writer* (New York: Times Books, 1986), 244.

118. William Brashler, "Poison Pen," *Chicago* 41 (January 1992): 49–50.

Historiographical Essay

RE-VIEWING ROCK WRITING

The Origins of Popular Music Criticism

Steve Jones

Interviewer: What makes your opinion any better than that of a cabbie out there on Sixth Avenue?
Lester Bangs: Nothing. Let him do it!
—From an interview in *Throat Culture*

POPULAR MUSIC CRITICISM has been canonized, organized around standard phrases and prosaic writing. As Mark Fenster claims,

> [R]ock criticism, at this point in its history and in the history of rock, is almost self-generating, as though there were a big CD-ROM somewhere in the vaults of *Rolling Stone*'s offices that can simply spit out various catch phrases and judgements, even for rock critics who miss [a] show. . . . [R]ock criticism is now more or less an exercise in pasting certain tried and true catch phrases and analogies to record reviews and artist profiles.[1]

One reason for the current state of popular music criticism, as described by Fenster, is simply that there is little left to write about, for aesthetic standards have changed little. Another reason is that many writers have left popular music criticism to write social criticism. The two had been intertwined in popular music criticism's heyday in the sixties and seventies, but had begun to unwind as, seemingly, youth itself sought to leave the political out of popular music.

This essay is in part inspired by John Pauly's notion that the New Journalism has become a "literary canon," removed from its origins.[2] Like the New Journalism, popular music criticism is

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1. Mark Fenster, "Consumers' Guides: Pop Music Criticism and Pop Music Practice" (Paper presented to the annual meeting of the Popular Culture Association, Louisville, Kentucky, March 1992), 1–2.
2. John Pauly, "The Politics of the New Journalism," in *Literary Journalism in*

disconnected from its evolution and history, a history that ironically is entwined with that of the New Journalism. As Pauly points out, the New Journalism "affirmed a generational identity" as well as "articulated a cultural identity."[3] Popular music critics were writing about both generational and cultural identity well before the term *New Journalism* came into popular use, and popular music itself is precisely about such affirmation, as the music's frequent use in advertising constantly attests.

Little exists in the way of systematic study of popular music criticism as it evolved in the press, as little understanding of its history exists among many popular music critics. An increasing number of academic studies of popular music are published each year, and there are several scholarly journals that serve as forums for popular music scholars.[4] Yet little has been published about popular music criticism in popular music scholarship, journalism and mass communication scholarship, or the works of critics themselves.

Journalism historians even seem to have overlooked the publications popular music critics wrote for, like *Crawdaddy*, *Creem*, *Musician*, and *Trouser Press* (to name the well-known ones), save for a handful of research articles on *Rolling Stone* magazine.[5] But although histories of *Rolling Stone*, a leading publisher of music criticism, offer glimpses into the publishing industry and the counterculture, musicologists and sociologists alike appear to have ignored popular music criticism as a site for academic study. Only Abe Peck's *Uncovering the Sixties*, a history of the underground press in the 1960s, situates the rise of magazines catering to a rock audience within the framework of cultural and political debate.[6] Indeed, the editorial *raison d'etre* of many underground periodicals (then and now) is to provide an audience with published music criticism. Underground periodicals have been particularly tied to popular music criticism because such periodicals have served as a "farm league" for many journalists who subsequently found careers in the mainstream or underground press.

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the Twentieth Century, ed. Norman Sims (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 110–29.

3. Pauly, "New Journalism," 119.

4. A number of publishers have begun popular music series. Among the most recent titles are: Sara Cohen, *Rock Culture in Liverpool* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Robin Denselow, *When the Music's Over* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989); *World Music, Politics and Social Change*, ed. Simon Frith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989); *Rockin' the Boat: Mass Music and Mass Movements*, ed. Reebee Garofalo (Boston: South End Press, 1992); and Steve Jones, *Rock Formation: Music, Technology and Mass Communication* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1992). Among the most visible journals are *Popular Music*, published in England, *Popular Music Studies*, published by Bowling Green State University Press, and *Tracking*, published by the U.S. branch of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music.

5. The best history of *Rolling Stone* is Robert Draper, *Rolling Stone Magazine: The Uncensored History* (New York: Doubleday, 1990).

6. Abe Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties* (New York: Pantheon, 1985).

Pop music critics from the 1950s (pop's earliest days, for the purposes of this article) used the music press to do more than analyze music. Their writing carried the seeds of a post-war American cultural criticism based on the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the baby-boom generation. This criticism essentially recovered the aesthetic and cultural values of post-war youth and asserted the validity of their experience. Taking motion pictures, art, and music as their texts, critics helped blast a hole through the post-war social hardening of the 1950s—and through the journalistic conventions that the New Journalism came to question.

This essay seeks to establish and survey some of the dominant themes in popular music criticism. The aim is to understand the writing of those critics whose styles seem to have left the strongest imprint on popular music and popular music criticism, to trace the evolution of popular music criticism, not to build a critics' Hall of Fame. The critics whose work was chosen for inclusion in this essay—Nat Hentoff, Ralph Gleason, Robert Christgau, and Lester Bangs—are at the center of popular music criticism in part because they are simply fine writers, and in part because the themes they have mined remain the themes of popular music criticism. Many other critics have explored the same territory, with greater or lesser effect, but few have ranged as far as these four.

It should be noted at the outset that this essay focuses on criticism of popular music styles denoted by terms such as *rock, rock and roll, rhythm and blues,* and *pop.* Such criticism was published almost exclusively in fanzines and the underground press, and only later in the mainstream press. Other journalistic space for criticism simply did not exist for those wishing to write about popular music in the 1950s and 1960s, and the underground press owes some of its life to its many pages of popular music criticism.

One way of assessing the evolution of popular music criticism is to view it across the categories within which it has appeared. As Hoffman notes, one can find writing about popular music in fanzines, underground journals, music trade magazines, serious music journals, newspapers, general interest magazines, and books.[7] By this means, for example, David Sanjek discusses the ideology of authenticity among rock music critics. Yet such categorization causes Sanjek to overanalyze the publications and underanalyze the criticism itself.[8]

My approach is to analyze three intertwined themes found in popular music criticism—race, authenticity and mass culture. In reading popular music criticism one is likely to detect one or more

7. Frank Hoffman, *The Literature of Rock, 1954–1978* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1981), x.

8. David Sanjek, "Pleasure and Principles: Issues of Authenticity in the Analysis of Rock 'n' Roll" (unpublished manuscript, 1991). To Sanjek's credit, his paper does serve as a foundation for further studies to assess the influence of popular music publications among fans.

of these themes within the space of single articles, in a paragraph, occasionally even within one heavily weighted sentence.

Race, Records and Writing

Explaining why his writing shifted from music toward politics and cultural criticism, Nat Hentoff said, "You see the discrimination and injustice in the music industry and you naturally gravitate toward [social criticism]. Unless you're a totally aesthetic critic and that's a whole 'nother thing."[9] If nothing else, popular music forced critics to confront social issues and go beyond aesthetics, to explore the ways in which meaning is made from popular music. Popular music critics, as Patricia Bizzell has noted, wrote about "that part of human life which is constructed through shared language use, the life-in-language that connects us to various pasts, puts us in concert or conflict with contemporaries, and provides us with visions of collective futures."[10] That such collective envisioning should surface in popular music criticism is not surprising, since the music itself often seemed to have a similar purpose. Popular music was considered to have a meaning beyond the aesthetic, and consideration of that meaning—its construction, constitution, and communication—occupied many critics.

Popular music critics' examination of the urban music scene led them to write about racism and urban and moral decay. Since most music is recorded within and distributed from large cities, and since most "scenes" are labeled by the city in which they originated (the San Francisco Scene, the Liverpool-based Mersey Beat, the Minneapolis Sound, the Athens Underground), this connection seems natural. Even though many musical forms incorporated into popular music are born outside the city, many are inextricably linked to the inner city (in particular disco and rap music), and the city provides a context within which popular music incorporates elements of urban life (and vice versa). At first critics addressed these issues within the context of popular songs' lyrics. Later, they would address those issues without prompting from lyrics.

One of the first popular music critics to address race in his criticism was Ralph J. Gleason (1917–1975). Though he was sometimes excitable, even giddy, his writing was usually stately, and slightly ponderous. His extreme faith in the revolutionary promises held within rock and roll, gleaned perhaps from his association with San Francisco's psychedelic avatars, the Jefferson Airplane, during the late 1960s, is legendary. To Gleason, at least late in his life, rock and roll *was* the revolution. Gleason passed that way of thinking on to his disciple, Jann Wenner, and to a generation by way of their joint project (later Wenner's alone) *Rolling*

9. Nat Hentoff, conversation with the author, Tulsa, Okla., 26 September 1990.
10. Patricia Bizzell, "'Cultural Criticism': A Social Approach to Studying Writing," *Rhetoric Review* 7 (Spring 1989): 229.

Stone. To this day the magazine still features Gleason's name at the bottom of its masthead in tribute to his contribution to the lingering philosophy of the magazine.

In 1960, Gleason began to look beyond the aesthetic criticism of jazz, for which he was known. Racism provided the spark Gleason needed to reinvent himself. In a "Perspectives" column in *Downbeat* magazine, Gleason related his anger and frustration at the scaling down of the live San Francisco jazz scene by city authorities who feared rioting (there had been fighting in the crowds of several jazz and rhythm and blues shows).

"What's behind this," Gleason wrote, "whether the people who make the decisions in such matters know it or not, is a fully functioning Jim Crow stereotype. . . . The fact that you can have a fight at a Guy Lombardo dance, the Harvest Moon Dance, or a football game between 22 Caucasians has nothing to do with it apparently. Some people can't think past their first impressions."[11] He goes on to blame schools and the education system partially, saying they do not encourage thinking and have made language "fuzzy" enough to allow words to mean many different things, apparently even that racism is okay, or that it is not even racism. "We are in the midst of a gigantic social upheaval in which the Newport Jazz Festival riot, the southern lunch-counter sit-ins, Elijah Muhammad, and countless other things are part of the whole," Gleason wrote in that column. "Patience, tolerance and, above all, compassion are needed everywhere. The protest inherent in jazz has always been a protest *for* good, *against* evil. Let us not allow it to curdle into hate."[12]

Later that year as the Civil Rights movement began to catch fire, many youths (as well as jazz musicians) saw themselves in a position to redirect the hatred of blacks. Gleason was beginning to adopt a more socially aware standpoint. Music was the tonic, he seemed to be saying. "[The 1960 Monterey Jazz Festival] proved many things," he wrote, again for *Downbeat* in an article that seems a turning point for Gleason's approach to criticism. "That a jazz festival devoted to music does not incite a riot; that American audiences can and will be patient, attentive, and sympathetic to the most exploratory of musical experiements; that, as in the words of Jon Hendricks sung by Lambert-Hendricks-Ross, 'everything started in the house of the Lord.'"[13]

In this article, Gleason seems to realize that there is a cultural significance to the music of which he writes—the slave songs, African music, "sexually symbolic" blues; but he still concentrates on the performances, on music, focusing on the quality of the sounds and power of their presence. "Communication was the key to both afternoon programs," Gleason wrote. "It might be said that

11. Ralph J. Gleason, "Perspectives," *Downbeat*, 15 September 1960, 38.
12. Gleason, "Perspectives," 38.
13. Ralph J. Gleason, "Monterey: The Afternoons," *Downbeat*, 10 November 1960, 18.

these two programs not only represented both sides of our society today but that they communicated directly to the audience with the same intensity with which the two sides of society burn. . . . But just as some can see the world of technology, of the Bomb, and of the giant shedding of skin of discrimination by black peoples of the world, with fascination and excitement and a kind of joy mixed with fear, so did this music communicate."[14]

A critic who quickly realized the social significance of popular music and often wrote about the connections between jazz and race is Nat Hentoff (1925–), today a prominent political journalist and columnist for the *Village Voice*. Less prone to out-on-a-limb blanket statements and more thoroughly logical than Gleason, the two were originators of popular music criticism.

Though younger than Gleason, Hentoff took a similar career path. Starting out as a music reviewer for such publications as *Downbeat* and the *Jazz Review*, he later contributed to *Playboy*, the *New Yorker*, *Commonweal*, the *Saturday Review*, and the *Reporter*, becoming in the process (like Gleason) as much a social as a music critic. He currently writes little about popular music, preferring political analysis for the *Washington Post* and frequent contributions to such publications as the *Village Voice*, *New Republic*, and *Progressive*.

Hentoff's early writing demonstrated his social concerns. He picked up early on the idea that jazz had much more to it than notes, charts, and scales, more than simple musical exploration. To Hentoff, much jazz was about rebellion, but he always seemed to bring the discussion back to the context of the music itself. Social concerns for Hentoff are a *part* of popular music, and his main concern is its authenticity.

As Gleason had in 1960, Hentoff began to write about racism in jazz. However, he was quicker to turn to popular music as a vehicle for social commentary than Gleason (and quicker to abandon it, too). In an article for *Commonweal* the connection to his earlier writing on jazz and racism becomes clear. He wrote that "being oneself, or trying to be, may mean being totally alone, and that prospect is for the most part unbearable. The overall context is somewhat similar to that in Southern cities where 'liberal' whites have become increasingly silent."[15]

Hentoff did not abandon writing about jazz at this early stage of his career, as Gleason did. However, his interest in the social issues surrounding jazz brought him more frequently to folk music and rock and roll. His attention, then as now, focused on protest, regardless of the medium within which he found it. In 1965, for instance, he wrote of Miles Davis and John Coltrane: "Neither makes speeches on prejudice in their music, but their jazz speaks from a position of strength in their self-images as creators who do

14. Gleason, "Monterey," 18.
15. Nat Hentoff, "They *Are* Playing Our Song," *Commonweal*, 6 May 1960, 145.

not have to—and will not—grin for the white man."[16] Since jazz is the full expression of the man playing, Hentoff writes, it is clear that modern jazz is more grounded in protest than it ever has been.

The folk movement of the 1960s provided Hentoff with a fertile site for examining American protest. In a 1967 essay Hentoff predicts the demise of several forms within the folk revival in what amounts to a quite impressive feat of extrapolation. Importantly, Hentoff's writing is again informed by his thoughts on race. For instance, Hentoff wrote that urban white boys trying, with admittedly good intentions, to reproduce the rural black blues sound to which they have no cultural connection are going to fail. There is no way for Paul Butterfield to sing and play real Delta blues as though he were born black and on the land a half-century ago. It is impossible to recreate someone else's history, Hentoff says, so if they are to survive artists must face the future more as themselves, and create more of their own material. His focus is still on the music, however, and the expression of race via music.[17]

By the late 1960s Hentoff left popular music criticism, but not before writing an article for *Parents* magazine that encapsulates his, perhaps essentialist, view of why popular music is important. Rock music, Hentoff tells the nation's parents, is a dialogue between young people. "It provides the quality of identification, what comes from knowing that your most urgent concerns and anxieties are understood by others who share them."[18] A central facet of the importance of rock music, the reason it seems to provide existential truths, Hentoff says, is because it is diversified culturally. "In a society increasingly divided by color and class, teenagers are able, at least through their music, to transcend those barriers."[19] They can dig Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding, Johnny Cash, Bob Dylan, and the Beatles with equal aplomb.

Returning to a theme from his jazz criticism, Hentoff writes that such diversity had not always been present. There were clearer geographic and ethnic lines only fifteen years earlier. There was hillbilly music for Southern whites, blues and jazz for blacks and some white aficionados, Broadway and show tunes for most of the white youth. Elvis Presley and Bob Dylan helped change that, primarily because both were equally indebted to white and black artists. By 1969, Hentoff suggests, the music was tearing down racial barriers.

Such faith was also exhibited by Lester Bangs (1948–1982), who since the 1970s has inspired many critics for the underground press. Like Gleason and Hentoff, Bangs was a fan of popular music. Unlike them, he began writing about rock, and stuck with it, though showing a taste for jazz and blues from time to time. Bangs's articles, particularly those written during his tumultuous

16. Nat Hentoff, "Jazz and Race," *Commonweal*, 8 January 1965, 144.
17. Nat Hentoff, "Jazz and Race," 144.
18. Nat Hentoff, "What Pop Means to Kids," *Parents*, May 1969, 46.
19. Hentoff, "What Pop Means," 46.

years as writer and editor at *Creem* magazine in the 1970s, were always an up-front challenge to his readers, to his editors, to his culture. At times he wrote to anger people and usually succeeded (certainly he succeeded in enraging Jann Wenner, who fired Bangs from the staff of *Rolling Stone* in 1971 for being disrespectful to musicians).

In his very first published piece, a review for *Rolling Stone* on the MC5's debut album *Kick Out the Jams*, Bangs sounded somewhat like Gleason or Hentoff, and his later writing hearkened back to the blues as an indicator of a "true" roots heritage. In every case, though, as with Hentoff, it was the music that most counted; but revolution counted too, and the MC5 were judged by their political stance as well as their music. Bangs found them lacking on both counts. There were hints of the coming bombast, the style that first took form in Bangs's review of the Count Five's *Carburetor Dung*:

> I suppose the best way to characterize the album would be to call it murky. Some of the lyrics were intelligible, such as these, from "The Hermit's Prayer": "Sunk funk dunk Dog God the goosie Gladstone prod old maids de back seat sprung Louisiana sundown junk an' bunk an' sunken treasures / But oh muh drunken hogbogs / I theenk I smell a skunk." Lyrics such as those don't come every day, and even if their instrumental backup sounded vaguely like a car stuck in the mud and spinning its wheels, it cannot be denied that the song had a certain value as a prototype slab of gully-bottom rock 'n' roll.[20]

Like Gleason, Bangs was sometimes excitable and giddy. And, like Gleason, Bangs had an extreme faith in the revolutionary promise of popular music as personal fulfillment and transcendence rather than as social revolution. Bangs was not troubled so much by racism as by the sheer nihilism of the rock generation he had grown up with, a nihilism that expressed itself in punk rock. In a 1979 *Village Voice* article titled "The White Noise Supremacists," Bangs scolded the New York punk scene for its racism:

> You don't have to try at all to be a racist. It's a little coiled clot of venom lurking there in all of us, white and black, goy and Jew, ready to strike out when we feel embattled, belittled, brutalized. . . . But there's a difference between hate and a little . . . gob at authority: swastikas in punk are basically another way for kids to get a rise out of their parents and maybe the press, both of whom deserve the irritation. . . . Maybe. Except that after a while this casual, even ironic embrace of the totems of bigotry crosses over into the real poison.[21]

20. Lester Bangs, "Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung," *Creem*, December 1971, 63.
21. Lester Bangs, *Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 275.

Unlike other popular music critics, Bangs was extremely self-reflexive, and this is what sets him squarely in the ranks of the New Journalists. For example, in the same 1979 *Voice* article he wrote that "in Detroit I thought absolutely nothing of going to parties with people like David Ruffin and Bobby Womack where I'd get drunk, maul the women, and improvise blues songs along the lines of 'Sho' wish ah wuz a nigger . . . ,' and of course they all laughed. It took years before I realized what an asshole I'd been."[22]

But Bangs is less interested in the details than in larger cultural patterns:

> All I knew was that when you added all this sort of stuff up you realized a line had been crossed by certain people we thought we knew, even believed in, while we weren't looking. Either that or they were always across that line and we never bothered to look until we tripped over it. And sometimes you even find that you yourself have drifted across that line. . . . Most people think the whole subject of racism is boring, and anybody looking for somebody to stomp is gonna find them irrespective of magazine articles. Because nothing could make the rage of the underclass greater than it is already, and nothing short of a hydrogen bomb on their own heads or a sudden brutal bigoted slap in the face will make almost anybody think about anybody else's problems but their own. And that's where you cross over the line.[23]

Bangs's ire was induced less by individual acts of racism and nihilism and more by the big social picture he perceived, at the center of which was popular music: "[S]ince rock 'n' roll is bound to stay in your life you would hope to see it reach some point where it might not add to the cruelty and exploitation already in the world."[24] His writing often included sweeping, bittersweet speculations about the baby-boom generation, such as this one written just after Elvis Presley's death: "If love is truly going out of fashion forever, which I do not believe, then along with our nurtured indifference to each other will be an even more contemptuous indifference to each others' objects of reverence."[25]

What is conspicuously absent from Bangs's writing is the inherent sense of optimism that suffused popular music criticism. Gleason and Hentoff, for instance, did not so much champion popular music as divulge their faith in it as a force for positive social change. They were not convinced that popular music would end racism, but did seem to believe that popular music would bring it to a swifter conclusion among youth. In Bangs's writing such faith is present, but it is far from certain. It occurs as a marker of

22. Bangs, *Carburetor Dung*, 276
23. Bangs, *Carburetor Dung*, 280, 282.
24. Bangs, *Carburetor Dung*, 282.
25. Bangs, *Carburetor Dung*, 216.

change in popular music and the popular music audience, a change playing itself out still in the critical discourse concerning rap music, racism, and violence. The current broken, mass-mediated conversations between generations that find more disagreement than harmony in the popular music to which they cling represent Bangs's conviction: Popular music can bring people together . . . but it is just too late.

Criticism, Mass Culture, and Commercialization

Mass media and mass culture remain prevalent topics in pop music criticism. Critics comment on pop culture itself, the aspirations and self-projecting fantasies of those within that culture, the dissolution of that culture, and in some cases "blueprints" for the improvement and preservation of that culture. Such commentary makes up a vast amount of Robert Christgau's work, as it did Bangs's and Gleason's.[26] Christgau (1942–) is one of the few contemporary rock critics who can boast of a career traversing popular music since the mid-1960s—and who can boast of a career as a rock critic without using *Rolling Stone* as a springboard.

Christgau's main concern has been the aesthetics of rock. After Christgau appeared on the scene as a columnist for *Esquire* in 1967, the face of the entire genre began to take on the features he gave his writing. He has called himself "the dean of rock critics," and while writers like Greil Marcus, R. Serge Denisoff, and Wilfred Mellers have displayed a more classically academic tone, Christgau is the professor of the popular critics. He may be the first to invent a theory about the job of the pop music critic in society, and his vision certainly has helped define the mainstream approach to popular music criticism as it now exists. Rock is art, Christgau says, nothing less, nothing more. And it is a powerful social force, magnified by its place in mass media.

In Christgau's writing, one finds a remarkable unity in his vision of popular music and popular music criticism, even if one can also discern a tendency to repeat things that have already been said. His intentions seem to have remained the same today in his "Consumer Guide" columns for the *Village Voice* as they were in his earliest "Secular Music" columns for *Esquire*.

In one of Christgau's earliest columns for *Esquire*, a review of folk singer Phil Ochs, one can find elements that still survive in his writing. There is a demanding sense of what makes music *musical* (a standard missing among some critics, notably Lester Bangs), a sense of political certainty, a sense of where pop music should be and what it should be saying to the culture or subculture it addresses. Unlike Jann Wenner, Gleason, and others who gath-

26. Though not included in this study, Marcus's writing is particularly relevant in comparison to Christgau's. Both critics achieve many of the same ends, though they begin in different places. Christgau's emphasis remains rooted in music, Marcus's in sociology. For a representative sample of Marcus's writing, see his *Lipstick Traces* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

ered under *Rolling Stone*'s masthead, one rarely found Christgau reeling with giddiness over the revolutionary promises of rock music. "Good intentions" he wrote, "are never good enough," and revolutionary promise had little influence on his musical taste.[27]

After five years as a rock critic, Christgau collected his writing in a book, *Any Old Way You Choose It*, in which he outlined his theory of criticism. He talks of formulating these theories as a college student, first impressed with the idea of rock as an "art form" (or "antiart" as he also terms it) after seeing a painting of a nude woman into which a radio had been installed. The radio was tuned to a pop music station. He declared an early penchant for jazz and literature, amplified by Motown and Phil Spector recordings (which inspired him to compile charts, precursors to his "Consumer Guide," a regular feature in the *Voice*). Later, when the Beatles rolled around, he says, he began to view the music through the "secular theology of new-critical literary analysis" he was studying: "I certainly didn't reject all art, and I didn't exactly decide that what is called high art is bullshit—I still don't believe that. But I did come to understand that popular art is not inferior to high art, and achieved a vitality of both integrity and outreach that high art had unfortunately abandoned."[28]

He dismisses much of his period with *Esquire*, saying that his attitude could be condensed to a phrase—"Hooray Little Richard, boo Jefferson Airplane," a phrase quite contrary to that asserted by West Coast critics (especially Gleason). But Christgau softened and learned to like the hippies: "Most important, they like mass culture: What was then called rock—popular music created by the counterculture—embodied my own personal contradictions."[29] His impulses were part pop-culture theorist and part bohemian, and these fused in his politics, he said. Both approaches were pragmatic, suggesting complementary modes of self-preservation. "Pop is really a system for beating the system, both perceptually, by aesthetic reinterpretation, and physically, by selective consumption. And bohemianism has always sought to shed the system's outworn, wasteful usages and uncover the true self."[30] Both, he wrote, are too insular on their own, and Christgau forged them into a course of critical action. He rejected the elitism of each approach, the pop and the bohemian, and claimed to have melded the two into a sensibility:

> I always resisted the term "criticism" to describe secular music—I preferred "amateur sociology" or "journalism" or just "writing," because the idea of criticism had been deracinated for me in college. As practiced by academics, it leeched life from works that had to survive, if they were to survive at all, not in some specimen

27. Robert Christgau, "Secular Music," *Esquire*, May 1968, 19.
28. Robert Christgau, *Any Old Way You Choose It* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1973), 3.
29. Christgau, *Any Old Way*, 6.
30. Christgau, *Any Old Way*, 6.

> bottle but in the commerce of the world, and it separated the critic—or, anyway, the critic's student—from the pleasure that has always been the secret of art. . . . My understanding was that criticism should invoke total aesthetic response. . . . The richest and most useful kind of criticism respected the work as it was actually perceived, by people in general. . . . Any critic who wrote about the music as if he/she were no longer a fan—or who was no longer a fan—was shirking all the fun.[31]

Christgau here addresses not only issues of the mass culture debate, but also the critical discourse regarding those issues, a remarkable thing for a genre that was less than ten years old.

Toward the end of the sixties, Christgau took to keeping one eye on the records being released and another on the record companies releasing them, and in time his writing showed a savvy understanding of the music industry. Like Gleason, Christgau bemoaned the industrialization of rock and roll. It had, he believed, spread widely as a commercial force but thinly as an art form, and though he blamed the music industry he mostly blamed the popular music audience for its unwillingness to make aesthetic choices for itself. This is an interesting and somewhat ironic perspective for the author of the "Consumer Guide," which, it could be argued, itself has lead to the industrialization of popular music—or at least to the industrialization of popular music criticism, as many publications have adopted Christgau's one-paragraph review style and grading system.

Hentoff, too, turned an eye to the music industry. In an article in *Commonweal* he writes of being able to overcome some of his derision as a jazz fan for the simplicity of teen-aged rock and roll music, saying that there are adult reasons for the mediocrity of most rock and roll.[32] Although he quotes a claim by ASCAP (the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers) that music's decline is due to the infestation of the young with rock and roll, he maintains that ASCAP's concern is less aesthetically based and more financially based, since its upstart competitor, BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc.), had signed the most rock acts, at considerable profit. Payola seemed to fill out the equation. Rock and roll was being selected and distributed on the basis of publishers' greed.

Gleason turned fifty at the height of the summer of love. He was too old to be accepted into the "now" generation but young enough to feel part of it anyway, and had begun to ponder the impact of rock music on American mass culture. He had seen it give voice to the frustrations of urban blacks through jazz; he was now aware of rock music giving voice to the frustrations of a much larger audience, American youth. With many other critics, Gleason at first saw the whole "Beatles-*Sgt. Pepper*-Airplane-Dead-hippy"

31. Christgau, *Any Old Way*, 7–8.
32. Hentoff, "Our Song," 143–45.

movement as an unbelievable utopia-in-creation. A generation was in motion, and rock music had propelled it.

It was exactly as Plato had predicted, Gleason would note. "Music, if Plato was right, might save us yet. Certainly no hippie, no folk singer, no long-haired guitar-playing rock musician is going to fry us all with napalm or blow us up with the bomb. This would be a better country with Zally [Yanovski, a member of the Lovin' Spoonful] as president, to say nothing of the thousands of others."[33] For Gleason it was the community that rock fostered that mattered, a community tenuously tied together by a variety of constructs: folk music, art, politics. As Frith claims, "Music is no longer commenting on a community but creating it, offering a sense of inclusion not just to the musicians, bohemian style, but also to the audiences, to all those people hip enough to make the necessary commitment to the music, to assert that it *matters*."[34] Gleason asserted just that. "I don't think music has lit up the world, so to speak," he wrote for *Rolling Stone* in April 1968. "But I do think the new music has established a kind of *Stranger in a Strange Land* head community, vibes in concert, thoughts and ideas and concepts changing together."[35] He predicts that 1968 might be the time during which the counterculture will find whether deviants within society might be accepted or squashed.

By December 1968, there were many clues about which direction the counterculture would travel. Assassinations, the party conventions, the election of Richard Nixon, escalation in Vietnam to five hundred thousand troops, drug busts of the Rolling Stones and Lovin' Spoonful, and a dissipation of spirit in the underground community were among the hints. Gleason was still committed to the idea of a youth rebellion, but now complained it was being sapped by Madison Avenue ads that could take the words "world revolution" and make them a pun on the revolving door of a Sheraton Hotel, sell Nehru shirts with the slogan "Meditate in '68," and make radio commercials that sounded like a drug pusher peddling the finest in Acapulco gold. It was then, also, that Columbia Records began an advertising campaign whose slogan was "The Man Can't Bust Our Music." Gleason was not pleased. "Neither Columbia Records nor any other entrenched privilege group is going to nurture any power which will obviously destroy it. The key word is obviously. As long as any point of view or doctrine is not considered a threat, it will be expressed and even encouraged because it proves the deification of the system was worthwhile."[36]

Having left jazz, Gleason now saw the co-opting of the counter-

33. Ralph J. Gleason, "The Final Paroxysm of Fear," *Rolling Stone*, 6 April 1968, 29.
34. Simon Frith, *Sound Effects* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), 88
35. Gleason, "Paroxysm of Fear," 28.
36. Ralph J. Gleason, "So Revolution is Commercial," *Rolling Stone*, 21 December 1968, 34.

culture occurring before his eyes, and predicted the total blurring of the line between rock music and commercialism, a line that he had helped draw earlier in the 1960s while writing about the San Francisco music scene. The greatest danger to the counterculture, and to youth rebellion, he said, is the ability of the established society to co-opt the leading elements and ideas. That it had not happened yet is no protection against that danger, he added. "They haven't figured out yet how to utilize all this power that's floating around, but you can believe that somewhere somebody is working on it. In fact, you'd better believe it."[37] It would have been most interesting if Gleason had lived to witness the similar implosion of the punk movement in the U.K., from the very co-optation it sought to control.

By March 1969 Gleason had constructed a theory of exactly how music works on its audience, and how music might be used as a cultural tool. He quotes Herbert Marcuse, to claim that public opinion is made by the media of mass communications. "If you cannot buy equal and adequate time," he quotes Marcuse, "how are you supposed to change public opinion in the monopolist way?"[38] By then he had moved almost completely away from the traditional music criticism he had written, based on reviews of performances and criticism, to a form of social and cultural criticism.

Much of his writing in this period begins to echo that of media critics. He wrote about understanding what makes news and how to get the news available to the media. He takes on issues of epistemology and the social construction of reality in popular culture. "When you accept 'Desolation Row' and 'Tom Thumb's Blues' along with 'Mr. Tambourine Man' and 'Rolling Stone' and the rest, you are accepting a definition of the world around you."[39] Despite the wildness of some of his theories (at times one wonders about his sanity, as he makes claims about Dylan and the Beatles having started "programs" to indoctrinate youth, which will begin when the time is right), he did make a particularly lucid prediction in the context of late 1980s/early 1990s political changes: "Gilbert and Sullivan may have made a government tremble, but I am convinced that rock'n'roll, in its total manifestations, will cause one to fall eventually."[40] In the light of changes in the political systems of eastern Europe, Russia, Germany, and the Tiananmen Square riot, his words are prescient.

For these and other critics the co-optation of popular music was to be guarded against, yet none wrote about the connections between commercialization and the popular music and underground presses. While seeking to preserve popular music's posi-

37. Gleason, "Revolution is Commercial," 34.
38. Ralph J. Gleason, "Songs Would Do More Than Books," *Rolling Stone*, 1 March 1969, 19.
39. Gleason, "More Than Books," 22.
40. Gleason, "More Than Books," 22.

tive spirit, as with their writing about racism, popular music critics wrote for a mass medium, and the music articulated itself in a bundle of media texts: records, films, radio, books, magazines. Popular music fans, musicians, and producers have forever sought to retain (or create) that positive spirit in the name of authenticity or credibility. Only Christgau managed to extricate himself from the morass of glib pronunciations concerning rock's demise by noting in an essay on the Rolling Stones that:

> Only popular culture could have rendered art accessible—in the excitement and inspiration (and self-congratulation) of its perception and the self-realization (or fantasy) of its creation—not just to well-raised well-offs but to the broad range of less statusy war babies who in fact made the hippie movement the relatively cross-class phenomenon it was. And for all these kids, popular culture meant rock and roll, the art form created by and for their hedonistic consumption.[41]

License and Essence: Criticism and Authenticity

Authenticity is probably the most simultaneously invisible and opaque of the ideas that occupy popular music critics, yet it is referred to or implied in almost all popular music criticism. It is also the most frequently debated topic, and one that brings popular music's inherent elitism to the fore. Since the job of the music critic is, fundamentally, to convince readers that particular music is good or bad, and since standards are difficult to come by in popular music, critics often refer to authenticity as a measure of aesthetic soundness to bolster their opinions. In numerous ways critics claim music is either "authentic" or "inauthentic." Some of these claims are contradictory, and the examples given here probably represent only the most obvious of these approaches.

Sanjek defines authenticity as central to the ideology of rock music, writing that it is "the degree to which a musician is able to articulate the thoughts and desires of an audience and not pander to the 'mainstream' by diluting their sound or their message."[42] Music critics seem to use a similar definition. Frith argues that the importance of the music press is "not commercial . . . but ideological. Fanzines, fanzine writers (and the important critics in the mass music papers share the fanzine stance) are the source of the arguments about what rock means, arguments not only about art and commerce, but also about art and audience."[43] Consequently, discussions of authenticity went beyond the aesthetic discourse of earlier criticism and included elements apart from the music itself.

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41. Robert Christgau, "The Rolling Stones," in *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock and Roll*, ed. Jim Miller (New York: Random House/Rolling Stone Press, 1980), 196.
42. Sanjek, "Pleasure and Principles," 2.
43. Frith, *Sound Effects*, 177.

Thus popular music criticism can be understood as meaning-making, a way of continuing the discourse of popular music on a non-musical plane.

As most critics who are also fans do, Nat Hentoff started out his career as a critic with a sense that he had to try to protect the authenticity and validity of the music he reviewed. In an article published in the *Saturday Review* in 1956, Hentoff scolds the jazz audience for not being more responsive to jazz history, for allowing older jazz musicians such as Coleman Hawkins, Jack Teagarden, and Cootie Williams to become dispossessed as their styles fell out of favor. Many were having trouble even securing club dates. "If jazz is indeed an 'art form,' a fair majority of its practitioners and supporters ought by now to be expected to possess—and listen according to—an informed sense of the history of this young musical language."[44] As things stood, Hentoff wrote, there was little room for any jazz player who had reached forty or forty-five years of age.

The best of the modern jazzmen—Miles Davis, John Lewis, Tony Scott, Charlie Mingus—have a good sense of what has come before, Hentoff writes, "but had there been more modernists fully aware of from whence they swung, it's possible that the quality of some of the present-day experimental jazz might have been of higher quality with longer liklihood of fruitable durability."[45] Like many popular music critics Hentoff claims that a "return to the roots" signifies authenticity. History, in other words, provides a context without which one cannot claim to be authentic.

And yet in a 1967 essay on folk music Hentoff urged young musicians not to rely on history too much, to compose and perform more of their own material as a way to get in touch with their own history. "For the city young, in sum, 'ethnic authenticity'—as that term refers to someone else's past of whatever color or region—is the route to absurdity."[46] Hentoff claimed that the mass media had for the most part destroyed the possibility of "ethnic authenticity," even for rural youths, who would now hear Marvin Gaye on the radio and not Mance Lipscomb on their porches. "Influences will, of course, continue, but the quest for authenticity must be pursued from within," he wrote.[47] He extended this claim to encompass black youth as well, stating that as blacks adapt the roots of the music of their culturally native Africa, they will no longer be, technically speaking, culturally authentic. He pronounces that they will, however, be personally authentic. Hentoff's turn from historical authenticity, based largely on ethnicity and "roots," to

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44. Nat Hentoff, "New Audiences and Old Jazzmen," *Saturday Review*, 15 September 1956, 30.
45. Hentoff, "Old Jazzmen," 30.
46. Nat Hentoff, "The Future of the Folk Renascence," in *The American Folk Scene: Dimensions of the Folksong Revival*, ed. David A. DeTurk and A. Poulin, Jr. (New York: Dell, 1967), 327.
47. Hentoff, "Folk Renascence," 327.

personal authenticity and self-expression, is thus clearly documented and delineated in one essay. It is as if, in the folk music movement, Hentoff determined that the ease of cultural assimilation provided by the mass media renders historical authenticity impossible.[48] Given the frequency and intensity with which he had written about authenticity in the past, he was forced to reconceive authenticity as a form of self-expression.

What is particularly interesting is that it is clear in his essay that Hentoff is still coming to terms with a new definition of authenticity. In some measure he contradicts himself by criticizing folk music for becoming less communal and more individualistic. And, still, his writing circles back to the music itself: "The message of the new folk can only be apprehended through the total medium—instrumental textures and ways of singing as well as the lyrics themselves. . . . To remain a markedly identifiable original—rising above the eddies of inevitable eclecticism—will require an order of imagination that may well make the survivors the true bards of the first international community."[49]

He also returns to the theme of the 1960 *Commonweal* article on jazz and rock. Rock, he says, is fundamentally a release of feelings—expressing the poignant loneliness felt at times by all adolescents, and their fear of becoming as emotionally grey as their parents appear to be. Hentoff adds a final note that rock is also Big Business, and will lose some of its credibility as its market expands, and as it becomes politically co-opted, introducing a point that Gleason argued and that within two years would, in the hands of other critics (and fans), become a key issue in the debate on authenticity in popular music.

Christgau, too, showed a propensity toward using popular music's history to determine its contemporary authenticity. In 1969 Christgau wrote a feature for *Stereo Review* entitled "A Short and Happy History of Rock." Rock had become "canonized" by the mass media after the *Sgt. Pepper* album, he argued, "making it the hottest item since the Lindbergh kidnapping."[50] Christgau reveals a prejudice for the rock and roll of the 1950s, detailing the criteria the music must pass in order to pass the "Christgau test." But first he tries to explain how rock ever got big in the first place: "The success of rock and roll was as much a rejection of contemporary popular music as it was an affirmation of the blues and the country-and-western music in which rock is rooted. The vitality of rock and roll . . . was the vitality of an oppressed subculture—all right, not that of urban blacks or hillbillies, but of the young, particularly the white young."[51] Christgau echoes Hentoff's claims

48. One wonders what Hentoff would think of contemporary "world music." Its authenticity is dubious and its pervasiveness makes the historical authenticity Hentoff writes of difficult to preserve.
49. Hentoff, "Folk Renascence," 330.
50. Robert Christgau, "A Short and Happy History of Rock," *Stereo Review*, March 1969, 80.
51. Christgau, "History of Rock," 80.

about rock music's ability to cross racial barriers, and refers to rock's "roots" in much the way Hentoff referred to authenticity. But, more importantly, he claims that rock's success is based on *musical* values and not political ones. Though he acknowledges the relation between social status, subculture, and rock's "vitality," he again keeps musical and political issues separate.

For Lester Bangs, authenticity was tied to fandom, and Bangs was, simply, a fan. As he once claimed, "My most memorable childhood fantasy was to have a mansion with *catacombs* underneath containing, alphabetized in endless winding dimly-lit musty rows, every album ever released."[52] What better evidence of fandom than the desire to be the ultimate collector?

For Lester Bangs gritty, grungy, gully-bottom rock and roll was the core of all rock and roll, the brutally honest, vulgar and savage core of his culture, one of the last brilliantly gleaming torches that culture had bothered to keep lit in its ascent toward extermination. Unlike Jann Wenner, who seemed to believe the torch would keep burning with an eternal flame fueled by "classic rock," Bangs struggled to discover new music that would keep the torch alight. As Christgau noted in Bangs's *Village Voice* obituary, Bangs kept "alive the dream of insurrectionary rock and roll as *Rolling Stone* turned to auteur theory and trade journalism," words that say as much about Christgau as Bangs, but sum up the direction that Bangs took upon leaving *Rolling Stone*.[53]

That path often led him to write about punk rock (he is credited with coining the term). He kept a close ear on New York's punk scene in the 1970s, and even traveled to England to view British punk first-hand. Bangs espoused a punk aesthetic long before it came to be associated with safety pins, and that aesthetic more than any other informed his writing. Indeed, as the following passage demonstrates, his core concept of authenticity was that inept, grungy rock was the only true rock and roll:

> It wasn't until much later, drowning in the kitschvats of Elton John and James Taylor, that I finally came to realize that grossness was the truest criterion for rock 'n' roll, the cruder the clang and grind the more fun and longer listened-to the album'd be. By that time I would just about've knocked out an incisor, shaved my head or made nearly *any* sacrifice to acquire even one more album of this type of in-clanging and hyena-hooting raunch. By then it was too late.[54]

Bangs was a critic whose main concern was always to keep the music aesthetically authentic, politics be damned, because, if the music became fake, there would be nothing left to grasp at to stem the tide of artificiality and hopelessness, of the existential nihilism

52. Bangs, *Carburetor Dung*, xi.
53. Robert Christgau, "Lester Bangs, 1948–1982," *Village Voice*, 11 May 1982, 75
54. Lester Bangs, "Psychotic Reactions," 59.

he believed was already smothering his society. If his ideas of what made music authentic were extreme and unapproachable, he still defended them with the passion and eloquence of a writer one would never think of finding in the pulp pages of an underground fanzine. For instance, in 1979 in a fanzine called *Stranded* he wrote that

> [Van Morrison's] *Astral Weeks* would be the subject of this piece—i.e., the rock record with the most significance in my life so far—no matter how I'd been feeling when it came out (Fall 1968). But in the condition I was in, it assumed at the time the quality of a beacon, a light on the far shores of the murk; what's more, it was proof that there was something left to express besides nihilism and destruction. . . . It sounded like the man who made *Astral Weeks* was in terrible pain, pain that most of Van Morrison's previous works had only suggested; but like the later albums by the Velvet Underground, there was a redemptive element in the blackness, ultimate compassion for the suffering of others, and a swath of pure beauty and mystical awe that cut right through the heart of the work.[55]

Bangs scoured records for transcendence, for anything that raised music (and thus Bangs) beyond everyday-ness. As he wrote in a review of a Captain Beefheart LP, "He's no more or less valid [than others], but [it is] simply that in an age of pervasive artistic negativism, we have in Cap a new-old man refusing to discard the heart and humanity and essential innocence that Western culture has at least pretended to cultivate for three thousand years and which our electrified, relativistic generation seems all too willing to scrap as irrelevant sentimental bullshit."[56]

In Bangs's writing self-reflexiveness counts. Self-parody counts as well, and self-knowledge most of all. He displayed all three, chronologically, as his style developed. More than any other popular music critic Bangs summoned authenticity from within himself. Like Norman Denzin's ideal interpretive interactionist, Bangs "moves outward . . . from [his] personal biography to those social settings where other persons experiencing the same personal trouble come together."[57] Only for Bangs those settings were most often records. Yet there is little doubt that his writing resonated not because of any claims he made in regard to the authenticity of the music he wrote about, but because of the authenticity he evoked by way of his interacting with experiences familiar to the popular music audience. To claim that Bangs was consciously practicing interpretive interactionism is absurd, but not pointless;

55. Bangs, *Carburetor Dung*, 20.
56. Lester Bangs, "Lick My Decals Off/Captain Beefheart," *Creem*, March 1971, 76.
57. Norman K. Denzin, *Interpretive Interactionism* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1989), 126.

he achieved what most critics seek, to understand "how this historical moment universalizes itself in the lives of interacting individuals."[58]

Criticism and the Experience of Modernity

The themes examined in this essay—race, commercialization, and authenticity—together illuminate the problems with which popular music and its audience have grappled. What sets popular music criticism apart is its tendency to venture beyond the particular work being criticized. Popular music criticism has served as a springboard for social discourse on many levels.

More importantly, for the purposes of this essay, the history of popular music criticism and the underground press are intertwined. Frith claims that "underground papers were important as the source of what became the dominant ideology of rock."[59] Underground papers were also the forum within which popular music critics could work, not only because editors selected them but because those publications delivered—and needed—an audience eager to read that writing. Few of the more prominent music magazines (*Rolling Stone*, *Creem*, *Musician*, for example) differed much from a formula followed by other media fan magazines. As Frith notes, "Music papers and record companies work together not because the papers are 'controlled' by the companies' advertising, but because their general images of the world, their general interpretations of rock, are much the same.[60] This connection between the music industry and the music press is compelling. But it is not by necessity a connection between the music industry and music critics. One could rework Frith's statement about music papers and record companies and claim that music *critics* and the underground press had a similar "general image of the world," and it is that image that the critics maintained long after the publications for which they wrote ceased to exist or matter.

The "general image" created by music critics strikingly resembles the discourse about media and modernity that Joli Jensen has analyzed.[61] The "tensions and contradictions" that Jensen identifies are present in popular music criticism as well, and give that criticism its poignancy. According to Jensen, the recurring themes of the modern discourse about media are "seduction, transgression, pollution and doom."[62] These themes are found in popular music criticism, too, from groping for an end to racism and decrying the pollution of "pure" music by commerce, to searching for redemption and transcendence in "authentic" rock and roll. The cultural arguments Jensen examines—about essential worth, the lowest common denominator, egalitarian elitism, contamina-

58. Denzin, *Interpretive Interactionism*, 139.
59. Frith, *Sound Effects*, 169.
60. Frith, *Sound Effects*, 173.
61. Joli Jensen, *Redeeming Modernity* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1991).
62. Jensen, *Redeeming Modernity*, 176.

tion, blurred boundaries, the pure and the polluting—are at once present in popular music criticism and in the critics. Not only do critics reflect on these "tensions and contradictions" in their writing, but they reveal their own belief in popular music and in youth. Consequently, popular music criticism is another arena within which the "modernity story," as Jensen aptly calls it, might be told.[63] Popular music criticism reveals a sense that a promise of social development based on progressive ideals has been betrayed.

These same "tensions and contradictions" gave rise to the New Journalism, too. David Eason argues that the New Journalism emerged from "cultural criticism focused on how the self might find its bearing in a society characterized by a breakdown in consensus about manners and morals and by the permeation of everyday life by a mass-produced image-world."[64] Eason describes two approaches—realism and modernism—by which New Journalists responded to that "breakdown in consensus." "Both . . . reflect an absorption in aesthetic concerns. . . . In realist reports, the dominant function of the narrative is to reveal an interpretation; in modernist reports it is to show how an interpretation is constructed."[65]

Popular music criticism has attempted both strategies, sometimes within the same article. It has also stretched journalistic conventions, as did the New Journalism, in ways that foregrounded meaning-making. In terms of its importance to popular music, criticism is one of those areas within which "rock and roll organizes, not the meanings we give to the world, but the ways we are able to invest and locate energy, importance, even ourselves, in those meanings."[66] Popular music criticism was from the start concerned with the struggle over meaning. As a literary form, it grew up side by side, often page to page, with the New Journalism.

63. Jensen, *Redeeming Modernity*, 59.
64. David Eason, "The New Journalism and the Image World," in *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Norman Sims (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 191.
65. Eason, "Image World," 199.
66. Lawrence Grossberg, "Rock and Roll in Search of an Audience," in *Popular Music and Communication*, ed. James Lull (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1992), 160

LITERACY IN THE UNITED STATES: READERS AND READING SINCE 1880.
By Carl F. Kaestle, Helen Damon-Moore, Lawrence C. Stedman, Katherine Tinsley, and William Vance Trollinger, Jr.
• Yale University Press
• 1991, 352 pp.
• $35, Cloth

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY of literacy changed course in the 1980s. It moved from the study of rates of simple literacy, toward the study of the *uses* of literacy. In other words, the history of literacy became the history of reading and readers. This change of direction has engendered a good deal of interesting and important work on readership in America, especially in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Comparatively little work, however, has been done on the history of reading in the twentieth century, even though the source materials for such a history are vastly greater. And, it might be argued, the policy implications of a history of reading in our own century are vastly greater as well.

The chief reason the twentieth century has been neglected by historians of reading may simply be the vastness of the raw materials. The twentieth century is blessed with incredibly rich and diverse sources for the history of reading, ranging from private papers and autobiographies, to reading examination records, to survey data sets collected by publishers, foundations, opinion research firms, and government agencies. In short, there is far too much for any one scholar to master.

Literacy in the United States is an exploratory adventure into this maze of historical evidence. It is a group project, coordinated by Carl Kaestle of the University of Wisconsin. Its chief virtue is the effort of the authors to explore as wide a range of sources as possible. Indeed, the chapters are organized by category of evidence. Two chapters review the history of reading and literacy testing; another reanalyzes government-collected data on consumer expenditures on reading materials; another explores surveys of readers and reading behavior; another studies the reading level and readability of early twentieth-century magazines; another looks at autobiographical writing about reading experience; another explores the role of gender in the business history of popular publishing.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the book is its subtle analysis of educational testing in the twentieth century. Better than any other work, *Literacy in the United States* places into historical perspective the standardized testing of reading. Anyone concerned about the purported decline in reading skills in the 1970s should read this book. But the book is far more than a historical compendium of educational research and survey data. The authors are equally subtle and imaginative in their evocation of the experiences of individual readers. The chapter on autobiographies, where readers recall how their lives were touched and transformed by books and newspapers, is a wonderful companion to the data-laden chapters on tests, surveys, and consumer expenditures.

Though the main strength of the book is its creative and systematic empiricism, Kaestle also provides several excellent overview chapters on historiography and theory. His review of the historical literature of the field is selective but insightful. And his discussion of the convergence in the 1980s of diverse theories of reader response is superb. In the tradition of Clifford Geertz's famous "Blurred Genres" essay of 1980, Kaestle shows how the postmodern notion of the indeterminacy of texts has inspired independent but analogous currents of research in history, in communications, in literature, in education, and in other

fields of study. In each field the individual reader has been thrust to center stage as "an active interpretive agent." No essay that I have seen does a better job of showing the links among such different theoretical streams as uses and gratifications in mass communication research and reader response theory in literary studies.

The book even develops its own theory—or at least its own "model." Kaestle summarizes the history of publishing in twentieth-century America as a story of "standardization and diversity," and the history of reading as a story of "agency and constraints." In other words, the business of publishing has clearly grown more standardized in our century, and thus readers are in some ways constrained in their choices. But there has been a growth of diversity in print as well, and readers are increasingly understood to be active agents, in choice and interpretation. In short, the history of reading in the twentieth century is neither the liberal's nightmare of homogeneous middlebrow kitsch, nor is it the conservative's nightmare of fragmented, centrifugal, multicultural diversity. It is both—or somewhere in between.

This, of course, is a rather broad and unexceptionable thesis. Indeed, it strikes me as not a theoretical model at all, but more an artifact of methodology. Throughout the book, the authors of *Literacy in the United States* work at two very different levels of empirical analysis: societal (demographic) and individual. In any study of human affairs, a societal-level analysis will tend to show constraints, while an individual-level analysis will show agency. This is not to say that the findings are therefore not "real." It is merely to say that they may fall more into the category of truism than theory.

But to complain about the modest theoretical claims of this book would be to miss the point. The book is not conceived to be a theoretical disquisition or even a systematic test of theory. It is an exploratory analysis of historical sources; it is, by its nature, evidence-driven. Not surprisingly, some of its theoretical conclusions are determined by the eclectic nature of its empiricism. But given the needs of the field, this is not criticism but praise. We have a surfeit of theory about audiences, readers, and reader response in the twentieth century. What we need is a genuine social history of reader response—that is, actual accounts of real readers reading. This book is a splendid first step into that wonderful and still mysterious world.

. . . *David Paul Nord*
Indiana University

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IF NO NEWS, SEND RUMORS; ANECDOTES OF AMERICAN JOURNALISM.
By Stephen Bates.
• Holt
• 1991, 320 pp.
• $11.95, Paper

IF NO NEWS, Send Rumors collects more than a thousand anecdotes and aphorisms in U.S. history, from 1690 (*Publick Occurrences*) to the 1988 presidential campaign. Among the well-known figures illuminated are Horace Greeley, Edward R. Murrow, Gloria Steinem, Sam Donaldson, and a host of presidents.

A few samples of the stories Stephen Bates has compiled:

—"We're not looking for a woman. We're looking for a reporter." TV news director to Judy Woodruff, 1969.

—In 1902, Pennsylvania Gov. Samuel Pennypacker pushes a bill through the state legislature making it illegal to depict men "as birds or animals" after a *Philadelphia North American* cartoon depicts him as a portly parrot. The cartoonists comply, depicting politicians as vegetables instead.

—"I really look with commiseration over the great body of my fellow citizens who, reading newspapers, live and die in the belief that they have known something of what has been passing in the world in their time." Harry Truman.

Bates focuses attention particularly on the conflict between newsgathering

and such issues as privacy, libel, and national security. He carefully documents sources for all information presented. The book is frequently hilarious; for instance, Bates recounts how James Gordon Bennett once told a cub reporter, "Remember, son, many a good story has been ruined by oververification." Occasionally, *If No News, Send Rumors* is sobering in its depiction of journalistic folly; for instance, "Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo, who was married, asked reporters not to write about his compulsive flirtations. They complied."

If No News, Send Rumors is an enjoyable book with a wide potential audience. For journalism historians, its utility lies in its wonderful collection of often lesser-known anecdotes and aphorisms—a superb source to add some human interest to lectures.

... Nancy Roberts
University of Minnesota

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NOW THE NEWS: THE STORY OF BROADCAST JOURNALISM.
By Edward Bliss, Jr.
• Columbia University Press
• 1991, 575 pp.
• $40, Cloth

USING NUMEROUS personal accounts and secondary sources, this lengthy book (over five hundred pages) reviews the history of broadcast journalism chronologically, from the first experiments in radio transmission at the turn of the century to the very beginning of the Gulf War in 1991. In his coverage of nearly a century of developments, Edward Bliss hits the landmarks with ease: radio's coverage of the Second World War, the transition from radio to television news, television coverage of Vietnam and the civil rights struggle, and the symbiotic relationship between politicians and broadcasting. He also concentrates on the men and women who pioneered electronic news reporting and who have contributed to its subsequent development. In the later chapters, Bliss discusses over the air broadcasting's uncertain future and the probable transformation of news broadcasting as we know it.

A special focus of the book is the technological breakthroughs that have shaped the news we see and hear. Bliss shows the impact of technologies from audio recorders to computers and satellites on news gathering, reporting, and presentation. A part of his account is devoted to the development of news broadcast formats, including news documentaries, news commentaries, evening news programs, talk shows, the Sunday morning panel programs, and today's magazine formats. Bliss presents background and information about lesser-known events and the behind-the-scenes stories about both famous and not-so-famous news incidentsand personalities.

Collected in this one volume is not only the story of national network news coverage but also some of the history of local news and cable news programming. This book pulls together vignettes, anecdotes, and stories from the author's sources into an exceedingly readable and vivid account of the development of electronic news reporting.

Because it covers so much ground, this volume will be exceedingly rewarding for all students of the electronic news media. Especially useful are the chronology of news developments, the bibliography, and the index in the back of the book. In sum, this book is lucidly written, and it is destined to become a classic in the field of broadcast journalism history. It should be required reading for anyone interested in news development.

... Louise Benjamin
Indiana University

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PRESERVING THE PRESS: HOW DAILY NEWSPAPERS MOBILIZED TO KEEP THEIR READERS.
By Leo Bogart.
• Columbia University Press
• 1991, 327 pp.
• $40, Cloth

BY THE MID-1970S, the heyday of daily newspaper journalism as a premier advertising medium appeared to be over. Readerships and circulation were falling, or at least failing to

keep up with a growing population, which represented advertising dollars lost or soon to be lost to other media, especially television. In an unprecedented move, two leading daily newspaper organizations, the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) and the Newspaper Advertising Bureau (NAB), agreed to launch an industry-wide effort to identify the reasons for declining newspaper popularity and to see what could be done. It was called the Newspaper Readership Project (NRP).

Leo Bogart, a central figure in what became an almost five million dollar project lasting from 1977 to 1983, has written what he describes as a "personal memoir" (x) on the genesis, organization, operation, and dismantling of the NRP. His book, *Preserving the Press*, is an insider's view of the inner workings of people at high management positions laced with a thorough understanding of late twentieth-century marketing and advertising techniques, personal observations into the industry and its elite, and just enough journalism history to make a blow-by-blow description move forward with narrative momentum.

Bogart, a former advertising executive at Revlon and for more than two decades vice-president and general manager of the NAB, came to the NRP with a devout faith in the efficacy of painstaking quantitative research. He saw newspaper journalism as a critical bulwark of American democracy, and he believed the medium's problems could be solved by an industry-wide effort. His book, on whole, details a six-year exercise in frustration.

Bogart and the editors and publishers he was trying to serve simply did not view things the same way. Bogart saw declining readership as a consequence not only of television but of changing social conditions (a changing work force with greater numbers of women; changing inner-city demographics, with traditional newspaper readers fleeing to the suburbs; and a more sophisticated newspaper audience with changing lifestyles). Editors, who mistrusted his research because it might try to bring advertising influence to bear on news content, insisted that the fault for declining readership lay in the newsroom, where they retained control. Publishers like the *Washington Post*'s Katherine Graham believed the problem could only be addressed by newspapers individually in response to particular local conditions, not by industry-wide efforts. Perhaps most importantly—and most disappointingly—where Bogart argued for the long-term, industry leaders agreed with their heads and demurred with their feet. Over cocktails, Bogart writes, publishers agreed "that long-term investment in newspapers' collective future" was a good idea. "But back in their counting houses, manipulating the abacus, confronted with the pressures of their staffs and the workaday realities of their businesses, they inevitably gravitated toward pragmatic decisions that favored the short run and the immediate" (271–72). Bogart saw his suggestions shunned repeatedly. From a video indexing service, to graduate programs for circulation managers, to test-marketing for narrative as opposed to pyramid-style newswriting—all were paths not taken.

Not that the NRP failed to make contributions. According to Bogart, whose book is every bit as much a defense of the project as an indictment of a short-sighted industry, the project definitely did make a difference, most concretely in the computerization of newspaper subscription lists. There were other circulation department innovations, as well as an improved public image generated by booklets, newspaper ads, slide presentations, idea exchanges, museum exhibits, and even movies (the project's most controversial offspring). Also, Bogart claims the NRP accelerated industry adoption of marketing techniques and worked as a catalyst for local readership projects.

Bogart admittedly offers no theoretical framework; his book is not a history. Rather, it is a personal, sometimes defensive, occasionally vindictive justification. (Editors are gener-

ally insecure and myopic; academe is irrelevant and often redundant as an industry servant.) But herein lies its lasting contribution to journalism history. With time, it will become a source document both for insights into the newspaper industry and its leadership in the late twentieth century. Bogart's defense of the NRP will then be cited in much the same way that turn-of-the-nineteenth-century commentators are cited today for their contemporary criticisms of the press. The book is useful reading, as the jacket notes, for students of American business, journalists, and communications researchers. Similarly, journalism historians—of today and tomorrow—will find it useful, though not always for the reasons Bogart intended.

... Charles E. Rankin
Montana Historical Society

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IGNATIUS DONNELLY: PORTRAIT OF A POLITICIAN.
By Martin Ridge.
•Minnesota Historical Society Press
•1991, 427 pp.
•$17.50, Paper

PUBLISHERS WOULD reject as implausible a protagonist who was, at various times, a politician, newspaper editor, farmer, land speculator, literary critic, author, and professional speaker. Yet Ignatius Donnelly (1831–1901) was such a man. He was lieutenant governor of Minnesota, member of Congress, and a state senator for several terms. He was elected to office as both a Republican and a Democrat, and ran on the ticket of several independent parties. He was nationally recognized as the foremost spokesman for the Populist party.

He was not just an author; he was one of the best-known writers of utopian novels in the late nineteenth century. His *Atlantis* was one of the most popular books of the time. He was not just a literary critic; he was the foremost proponent of the theory that Francis Bacon was the true author of works attributed to Shakespeare. His books on the subject won many converts to that school of thought—even in Great Britain.

This biography, a reprint of an award-winning 1962 University of Chicago book, is fascinating reading. A powerful, impetuous character, Donnelly was an honest politician and businessman at a time when corruption was standard operating procedure. He was unsuccessful more often than not in his endeavors, usually because his ideas were so far ahead of their time. When he did succeed, however, it was almost always to the benefit of people who were near the bottom of the economic ladder. He made many powerful enemies among both politicians and rich businessmen, who often suffered financially from his reforms.

Those who read the book expecting an extensive account of Donnelly's career as a journalist will be disappointed. He published and edited several newspapers, some quite influential at the time, but his journalistic work seldom gets more than passing mention, and then only in light of some political event.

Of greater value for journalism historians are Ridge's accounts of how newspapers were used as blatant tools of the political and financial power structure. He documents numerous examples in which editors intentionally and maliciously printed lies to help defeat candidates. Donnelly several times sued the major Minneapolis and St. Paul papers for libel—twice successfully.

Ridge also gives a clear picture of how critical it was for candidates who held any hope of success to have the unquestioned support of at least one influential paper. Several times, when he lost such support, Donnelly was forced to start a partisan publication—sometimes with financial support from others with similar political ideals, sometimes wholly on his own. Such accounts were sketchy, however, leaving a feeling that there was much of interest to journalism historians that was not being told.

... Roy E. Blackwood
Bemidji State University

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RISKY BUSINESS: COMMUNICATING ISSUES OF SCIENCE, RISK, AND PUBLIC POLICY.
Edited by Lee Wilkins and Philip Patterson.
• Greenwood
• 1990, 230 pp.
• $42.95, Cloth

RISKY BUSINESS, a collection of essays on issues of science, risk, and public policy, is not fundamentally historical in character. It is, nonetheless, a useful historical resource for those interested in issues of science communication and risk communication.

Only one of the twelve chapters, Robert Logan's survey of media coverage of health in the twentieth century, is explicitly historical, and it draws mainly on the work of others to argue that the traditional model of science "popularization" (dissemination of technical information to nontechnical audiences) needs to be replaced by "secularization" (a more complex, interactive model). But many of the other chapters—including both those that present original research and those that draw on existing research to present more conceptual arguments—are snapshots of particular journalism contexts of the 1980s. As such, they (like so much other journalism and mass communication research) offer important contemporary analytical documentation for future historians looking back at public communication of science and technology in the 1980s.

Taken together, the chapters in *Risky Business* show us how often scientific and technological issues get covered by the press, especially when one considers "risk" as part of the mix. The chapters look at coverage of floods and snowstorms, AIDS and drought, mental illness and nuclear energy (among other topics), in various comparative combinations. Many of the chapters show how coverage of science and technology gets linked to more traditional political concerns of journalism. They also show how the political or symbolic aspects of these stories make them "agenda-setting" stories, and in the process move the stories away from technical issues.

Many of the chapters explicitly turn to policy recommendations, suggesting ways that journalists should deal with natural disasters, risk reporting, and similar topics. Again, for the historian of journalism, these recommendations will be most useful as raw data: What were academics recommending to practitioners as the twentieth century wound down?

Unlike many collections, the book is well-edited and produced, with a good index and a single, unified bibliography. The chapters hang together nicely.

Although several of the chapter authors refer to their analyses as "historical case studies," few historians would agree that issues of documentation, motivation, personal influences, and other traditional historical concerns have been met in these studies. That does not mean, however, that historians will not (eventually) find these chapters interesting.

... Bruce V. Lewenstein
Cornell University

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THE MAN WHO WAS MARK TWAIN: IMAGES AND IDEOLOGIES.
By Guy Cardwell.
• Yale University Press
• 1991, 272 pp.
• $27.50, Cloth

IN MARK TWAIN, writes Guy Cardwell, we Americans "have erected an image of ourselves and then venerated it." Critics and others have seen Twain as epitomizing Americans in —to name a few ways that Cardwell cites—his irreverent humor, his role as crackerbarrel philosopher, his criticism of "hypocritical gentility, and the corrupting power of money." The hero of this "myth of national character, is, of course, a great hairy mammoth that never existed except as a projected image," the author cogently points out.

To demonstrate this contention, Cardwell examines Samuel L. Clemens the man as distinct—usually—from Mark Twain the writer, and shows that the man had residual prejudices, strange quirks, and possibly even kinks. Going beyond what Justin

Kaplan and Hamlin Hill have done (in *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain* [Simon and Schuster, 1966], and *Mark Twain: God's Fool* [Harper and Row, 1973], respectively), Cardwell has done scholars the service of culling from Clemens's letters and other documents a collection of uncomfortable facts and organizing them into chapters according to subject areas. Most notably, these are Clemens's relations with his wife and his wife's family; his social idealism and its conflict with his love of money-making and what Cardwell calls his neurotic bent for speculation; his sexuality; his love of the company of young girls, especially late in his life; his obsession with purity and cleanliness and the color white in clothing; his contrasting (but not contradictory) love of coarse humor; and his racial attitudes, which were liberal for someone with his background but still at times reflected, in letters to intimates, the prejudices of Hannibal, Missouri, in the mid-nineteenth century. The steady focus on Clemens's psychology and warts and on the many contradictions in his personality does not, it seems to me, render him less typically American, though it may render him less gloriously American. Indeed, a set of psychological curves and crotchets may come with the territory—including the Western territory.

What is troubling about the book is not its message, for Cardwell is careful to qualify his generalizations; he stops short of saying, for example, that Clemens's affection for young girls crossed the line into molestation in word or deed. What is troubling is that his observations are set forth in prose that often obscures rather than clarifies, a prose especially painful to anyone who appreciates Twain's great gifts to American writing: simplicity, unpretentiousness, and an ear for the natural pungency of ordinary speech.

One shudders to imagine what the author of "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses" (rule 14, "Eschew surplusage"; rule 18, "Employ a simple and straightforward style") would make of sentences like "They were utopistic and perfectibilitarian." Or of "bring our images of Twain in conformity with factuality." Or of the redundancy (something for which Twain flogged Cooper repeatedly) of "he usually, though not always, accepted." Or, considering rule 13, "Use the right word, not its second cousin," what Twain would make of the use "hypothecate" for "hypothesize," or "vastation" for "devastation." (The *Oxford English Dictionary* labels vastation as obsolete, though it does note that the word was "very common in 1610–1660.") These are not isolated infelicities, or I should not mention them: they are merely a few outstanding ones. What is worse, they come on top of a maddening preference for the passive voice, especially when it leaves the agent of the action a little hazy, and for the use of words in odd or pedantic ways ("substrate" for "substratum"; "maculate" for "stained" or "soiled"; "affines" for "in-laws") that merely show erudition rather than illuminate an idea.

Mark Twain deserves better.

... Edward A. Nickerson
University of Delaware

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60 MINUTES AND THE NEWS: A MYTHOLOGY FOR MIDDLE AMERICA.
By Richard Campbell.
• University of Illinois Press
• 1991, 240 pp.
• $29.95, Cloth

RICHARD CAMPBELL examines how the popular CBS television program has used myth over the years to appeal to its audience and make sense of a complicated world. Defining *myth* as "the central sense-making process at the heart of any culture" (137), Campbell argues that "60 Minutes" attempts to make sense of the contradictions of everyday life. "60 Minutes" maintains the Middle American myth of the supremacy of the individual over the impersonal institutions—the David-versus-Goliath stories that illustrate the American character.

Campbell highlights four reporting conventions found in "60 Minutes" seg-

ments: news as mystery, as therapy, as adventure, and as arbitration. All four share common ground with print news, and all four use reporters as characters and shape the information into a narrative with a beginning, middle, and end. He devotes a chapter to each style of report and details a segment that exemplifies each convention.

News as mystery casts the reporter as a detective and follows the traditional literary mystery formula. It identifies the crime and its victims, searches for clues, searches for and reveals the criminal, and explains the crime. Often, these segments pit an individual against a large institution, thus furthering the myth of individualism.

News as therapy places the reporter in the role of analyst. The reporter-analyst asks tough questions about moral issues and usually interprets the subject as either a villain or a hero, consequently helping viewers to make sense of the issues. The individual conflicts featured in these segments generally are dramatized as success versus failure, tradition versus change, and personal versus social.

News as adventure casts the reporter as a surrogate tourist, travelling and experiencing new things on the viewer's behalf. The reporter-tourist mirrors society's search for authenticity by rejecting the civilized, industrialized present for the natural and nostalgic. The villains confronted are often unfamiliar values, large bureaucracies, and modern life.

News as arbitration places the reporter in the middle of an issue, bringing out both sides of a story. The reporter-referee looks to experts for information and does not find a clear-cut villain. At the end of the segment the issue remains unresolved.

Campbell does not rehash old criticisms of the program nor does he try to determine what influence "60 Minutes" has had on society or news broadcasts. What he *is* concerned with is how producers of the program organize information so that the public can easily understand it. His arguments are well stated and supported with ample illustrations for each point. He viewed over one hundred episodes (three hundred segments) and examined transcripts in his research. His criticism and praise for the program is well-thought out and carefully stated. This book is not meant to be an advocate for or against "60 Minutes" or its style of reporting. It is an analysis of what Campbell sees as the main objective of the program: to make sense out of a very contradictory and complex world.

... Jana L. Hyde
University of Colorado
Colorado Springs

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FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE: SECTARIAN RESISTANCE FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE GREAT WAR.
By Peter Brock.
• University of Toronto Press
• 1991, 448 pp.
• $55, Cloth

CROSSING THE LINE: FROM EDITOR TO ACTIVIST TO INMATE—A WRITER'S JOURNEY.
By Samuel H. Day, Jr.
• Fortkamp
• 1990, 280 pp.
• $19.95, Cloth; $15.95, Paper

MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT: NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROTEST IN AMERICA.
By Frances B. McCrea and Gerald E. Markle.
• Sage
• 1989, 240 pp.
• $27.95, Cloth; $14.95, Paper

AS A GROUP, these three titles shed some light on alternative media—in particular, the press of peace advocacy. Brock's *Freedom from Violence* is an excellent companion to his encyclopedic *Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Era to the First World War* (Princeton University Press, 1968), which remains the standard history of United States peace movements. In his also meticulously researched *Freedom from Violence*, Brock focuses on the history (to 1914) of a variety of Christian sects, from the medieval Waldenses and the Czech Brethren in Hussite Bohemia to the Anabaptists of central Europe and the Hutterites of

Moravia. Included is ample discussion of the Mennonites, followers of the Anabaptist Menno Simons, in Europe and later in North America. Brock also traces the history of groups such as the Church of the Brethren and the Seventh-Day Adventists in the United States and the Plymouth Brethren in nineteenth-century Britain.

While Brock does not focus specifically on the press of these sects, he does include valuable information about the content of several. These include the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (started in 1850), the organ of the Seventh-Day Adventists, and the Mennonite *Herald of Truth* (dating from 1864). Most important, *Freedom from Violence* provides a thorough intellectual, cultural, and social history of an important group of Christian sects whose nineteenth-century members, especially, expended considerable energy in the creation and dissemination of tracts and periodicals to change public opinion on issues of war and peace. *Freedom from Violence* offers a small trove of well-documented information about the publishing activities of these sects that, while not framed as communication history, includes material welcome to communication historians interested in the alternative press.

Samuel H. Day's *Crossing the Line* is a thoughtful and readable autobiography of the crusading editor and political activist. Born in 1926, Day started out in journalism as a copyboy for the *Washington Star*, eventually reporting for the Associated Press and the *Lewiston* (Idaho) *Morning Tribune*, as well as other publications. As editor of the *Salmon* (Idaho) *Recorder-Herald* during the 1960s, his commitment to muckraking intensified. By the 1970s, Day had become editor of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, and in 1979, while managing editor of the *Progressive*, he was a codefendant in the famous H-bomb case. Since 1981 he has worked with Nukewatch, a nuclear disarmament organization in Madison, Wisconsin.

Crossing the Line is a candid, detailed account of the intellectual and political odyssey that took Day from the privileged life of his diplomatic family background to a federal prison, where he served a term as a result of his antiwar civil disobedience. One important influence that Day mentions is his time as an undergraduate at Swarthmore College, "a social melting pot, a bubbling cauldron for bright young men and women of every race and social station." More importantly, Day must have been exposed to the peace and social justice-affirming values that the school's Quaker founders bequeathed to Swarthmore.

Whatever their source, those values eventually directed Day away from mainstream journalism into advocacy and activism. His autobiography provides an intimate account of that journey. *Crossing the Line* will intrigue communication historians interested in such transitions or in journalistic working conventions and practices, both mainstream and alternative, during Day's career.

Frances B. McCrea and Gerald E. Markle's *Minutes to Midnight* is of interest especially for its account of the history of the Atomic Scientists Movement and its *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, which has advocated arms control and disarmament for more than forty years. The authors provide an interesting explanation for the success and limitations of the *Bulletin*: its "highly visible and well-connected scientists." As they explain, "The scientific mode of thought, so successful in naturalistic investigation, has certain limitations in the political arena; similarly the expert role, a prerequisite of good science, often proves a double-edged sword outside the confines of the laboratory. Thus the *Bulletin* drew strength from its scientists, but may have suffered from scientism and elitism."

Other chapters deal with the history of movements such as Ban the Bomb, SANE, and the Nuclear Weapons Freeze. Attention is paid to each organization's strategy and tactics, including some discussion of media use. Overall, *Minutes to Midnight* will be particularly valuable for historians and sociologists interested in how twentieth-century peace move-

ments (in this case, anti-nuclear weapons groups) have employed communication to advance their causes.

...Nancy Roberts
University of Minnesota

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THE INVISIBLE WEAPON: TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, 1851–1945.
By Daniel R. Headrick.
• Oxford University Press
• 1991, 304 pp.
• $32.50, Cloth

DURING THE FRENCH Revolution, the countryside sprouted a series of towers, where operators used semaphores to communicate in a kind of aerial telegraph. Although it required towers every few miles and worked well only on clear days, its speed surpassed the messenger on horseback as a means of communication. Governments have tried to improve or monopolize communications networks ever since. The early years of that process are the focus of this exhaustively researched book by Daniel Headrick.

Headrick is a fine writer and historian whose previous books, *The Tentacles of Progress* (Oxford University Press, 1988) and *The Tools of the Empire* (Oxford University Press, 1981) dealt with technology and its connection to imperialism during roughly this same time period. Here he turns his attention to the role telecommunications technology has played in world affairs, particularly in the conduct of war, and conversely, the role international relations played in forcing the development of telecommunications. It is a work of political and military history that integrates communications history, a blend frequently ignored by writers caught up in technological developments and their social effects.

It is Headrick's thesis that although telecommunications began with innovative tinkerers and far-sighted entrepreneurs, it was soon appropriated by governments as a weapon to use against their enemies —and sometimes their friends—to improve their relative positions in commerce or politics or both. Far from being a benign tool, telecommunciations, Headrick argues, in the past increased tensions among nations and accelerated the course of war, especially in its destruction of the rituals of diplomatic delay and face-saving customs passed down from the nineteenth century.

In great detail, Headrick recounts the development of telegraphy, of the transoceanic cables that gave new meaning to imperialism, of the radio traffic that would in a few decades supplant cable traffic, and of the emergence of the counter force spawned by telecommunications, communications intelligence, and cryptanalysis. His account of the consortia and cartels, of the government/industry alliances that fostered telecommunications, of the progress of battlefield communciations, makes it clear that the "military-industrial complex" existed in ambitious nation-states long before Eisenhower used the term.

To gain an economic and military edge and maintain control of distant interests such as colonies, powerful governments controlled the course of telecommunications by awarding exclusive franchises for landing cables or lucrative contracts for military communications equipment. Governments before the turn of the century recognized that telecommunications was fundamental to national security, and acted accordingly.

For instance, when radio began to damage the communications supremacy of cable, dominated by Great Britain, that nation forced a merger of communication agencies and companies. That public/private merger, although it would eventual lose the commercial struggle by backing a losing technology, protected Britain's global supremacy in communications for several decades. That supremacy put Britain in a position to defeat Germany in both world wars, not with military might but with communications and communications intelligence.

Governments have all been quick to use propaganda, seize private means of communication, and censor the public media when national security

was at stake. In the United States, government fostered a free enterprise free-for-all—until the Navy's needs during World War I led to the appropriation of every radio station and authorized the manufacture of radio sets that violated patents, thus bringing dozens of new firms such as Westinghouse, General Electric, and Western Electric into the radio business. After the war, an alliance between government and industry was spurred by Navy officials to freeze out American Marconi and create RCA. Headrick's version contradicts some of the "creation myths" perpetuated about David Sarnoff and that company

Although Headrick's book offers a clear-eyed look at international relations and telecommunications, commerce and media effects get short shrift here, as do citizen and interest pressures on governments that led to policy directives. But what he offers is a useful corrective to the idea that inventors and entrepreneurs simply make technology happen, bestowing it upon an adoring public that blindly buys whatever is produced. Projects the magnitude of global communications networks emerge from the demands of political power and information needs, via internal structures that foster or hinder their development with enormous consequences.

This is the saga, on the one hand, of attempts to monopolize communications, and, on the other, of technological innovations' ability to break down monopolies, just as shortwave radio eclipsed cable only to be eclipsed itself by satellite communications. It is also the saga of the rise and fall of Great Britain and its empire, and the rise of the upstart United States to global communications supremacy.

The Invisible Weapon is a valuable recounting of the role of nations in the development and expansion of communcations networks. It also signals how telecommuncations of the future will continue to serve as an economic and political weapon to foster development of some nations at the expense of others, as the haves and have-nots move farther apart on the economic and political scale.

... *Sandra Haarsager*
University of Idaho

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POINTS OF RESISTANCE: WOMEN, POWER AND POLITICS IN THE NEW YORK AVANT-GARDE CINEMA, 1943–1971.
By Lauren Rabinowitz.
• University of Illinois Press
• 1991, 264 pp.
• $34.95, Cloth; $14.95, Paper

LAUREN RABINOWITZ'S book is an intriguing study of the careers of three prominent women filmmakers in the post-war underground cinema in New York. Rabinowitz, a professor of American studies and communication at Iowa, lets each woman represent an era in avant-garde film, providing the reader with a history of that medium as well as of the three filmmakers she is discussing. Thus Maya Deren represents the formative years of the 1940s and early 1950s, Shirley Clarke the medium's heyday in the early 1960s, and Joyce Wieland the demise of avant-garde cinema in the late 1960s and early 1970s. *Points of Resistance* combines extensive archival research with long interviews with the two subjects who are still alive, Clarke and Wieland.

Rabinowitz stresses that each woman significantly contributed to the underground film movement, but she also argues that each one's success to a great extent depended on avant-garde cinema being perceived as a marginal form of media and art, offering fewer barriers for women than commercial films or painting and sculpture. In the late 1960s, as underground film became an established institution within a network of museums and universities dominated by men, barriers appeared, and the work of Clarke and Wieland, at least, was ignored, both in film collections and in histories of the movement.

Critical of histories that view films solely as the creation of the individual filmmaker rather than a relationship between the author and audience, Rabinowitz combines a traditional analysis of the films of the three women

with a discussion of how their works were distributed and promoted, which makes her book particularly valuable for film historians seeking to understand both the success of women filmmakers in the avant-garde movement and the movement itself. Deren and Clarke, for instance, were active in establishing a network of film clubs and art film houses and sought to influence the audience's reception of their work by speaking at showings and writing for film publications.

The shortcomings of the book are minor. One is that the two chapters dealing with Joyce Wieland are less true to Rabinowitz's aim of showing the relationship between filmmaker and audience, and they mar the coherence of *Points of Resistance*. In part, this is due to Wieland's prominence at a time when the distribution of underground films was firmly established and did not require the promotional efforts of earlier years. It is also a result of a less clear focus on the author's part on Wieland as a filmmaker. While the early careers of the other two women are discussed only briefly, Rabinowitz dwells extensively on Wieland's work as an artist in Canada, both before and after her foray into avant-garde cinema. Consequently, the end of the book drifts away from the New York avant-garde cinema.

Rabinowitz's interest in Wieland as an artist points to another problem, her tendency to treat avant-garde cinema as an art form rather than a mass medium. That leaves some questions unexplored. As an example, *Points of Resistance* stresses that underground filmmakers saw their works as directly opposed to Hollywood's output, but it also shows that Deren and Wieland borrowed from Hollywood genres and that Clarke faced competition from commercial productions using the techniques of avant-garde cinema in the late 1960s. Clearly, the relationship between underground and commercial films was more complex than one of simple opposition.

. . . *Jonas Bjork*
Indiana Univ., Indianapolis

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MAKE NO LAW: THE SULLIVAN CASE AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT.
By Anthony Lewis.
• Random
• 1991, 368 pp.
• $25, Cloth

THE YEAR 1991 marked the bicentennial of the Bill of Rights. A number of books have been published about the Bill of Rights in general and the First Amendment in particular. Among the most notable is *Make No Law* by columnist Anthony Lewis of the *New York Times*, a gripping account of the 1964 case *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*.

The *Sullivan* ruling, which First Amendment scholar Alexander Meiklejohn has characterized as "an occasion for dancing in the streets," has revolutionized American libel law. The U.S. Supreme Court held in *Sullivan* that libelous criticism of public officials requires First Amendment protection unless it is published with "actual malice," that is, with knowing falsehood or reckless disregard for the truth.

Lewis, who covered the *Sullivan* case as a reporter for the *New York Times*, elucidates the landmark decision by placing it in a broader sociopolitical perspective. He argues that segregation in the South and the increasing coverage by the press of the civil rights protests in the late 1950s and early 1960s clearly precipitated the "epic legal battle" between L. B. Sullivan, a city commissioner of Montgomery, Alabama, and the *New York Times* over an editorial advertisement.

Lewis also provides a succinct overview of the historical development of press freedom beginning with the First Amendment. He examines the vicissitudes of freedom of the press. For example, chapter 7 discusses the legislative and judicial status of the Sedition Act of 1798. Lewis also provides an enlightening survey of the judicial approach to freedom of speech and the press in the early twentieth century and from the 1930s to 1950s.

In discussing the evolution of press freedom, Lewis relies primarily on a

number of leading First Amendment cases, including *Schenck v. U.S.* (1919) and *Near v. Minnesota* (1931). Nearly all the major speech and press cases of the Supreme Court are discussed. Several significant state cases such as *Immuno, A.G. v. Moor-Jankowski* (1991), a letter-to-the-editor libel case of the New York Court of Appeals, are aptly noted.

Lewis uses secondary source materials extensively to lead readers beyond the language of court opinions. He skillfully explains why and how the U.S. Supreme Court has reached its First Amendment decisions in a particular way. His fascinating discussion of the *Sullivan* case, from the Alabama state court rulings to the *New York Times*'s appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, is illustrative.

Make No Law answers several important questions about the *Sullivan* case: Why did the *New York Times* not raise the First Amendment issues more strongly in the Alabama courts? Why did the *Times* change its litigation strategy in appealing the Alabama court rulings to the U.S. Supreme Court? How did the defense team prepare its appeal briefs in convincing the Supreme Court of the "seditious libel" aspect of the libel suit?

Most importantly, thanks to his access to Justice William Brennan's files on the *Sullivan* case, Lewis sheds light on the decision-making process involving Brennan's efforts to build a majority of the court for the opinion. The first draft of Brennan's opinion in *Sullivan*, included in the book as an appendix, is particularly valuable.

The impact of *Sullivan* upon the American press is the focus of the last four chapters of *Make No Law*. Although he argues throughout that the libel case has immeasurably liberalized the notion of press freedom, he takes special note of the chilling effect upon the press of rising litigation costs.

Make No Law contains twelve pages of notes for sources. The notes are limited to significant sources. A useful fourteen-page index is included at the end of the book. The full text of the Supreme Court opinion in *Sullivan* is also provided in an appendix.

Make No Law is a valuable addition to the journalism historian's library. It is full of fresh insights on the history of press freedom. For those interested in the First Amendment's evolution from the late eighteenth century to the present, the book is must reading.

... Kyu Ho Youm
Arizona State University

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CRIME AND THE AMERICAN PRESS.
By Roy Edward Lotz.
• Praeger
• 1991, 192 pp.
• $39.95, Cloth

ANECDOTAL RESEARCH and writing can be entertaining, provocative, inquiring, exasperating, and flawed. *Crime and the American Press*, authored by an associate professor of sociology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City, is all of the above.

Among the descriptive terms offered by Lotz is *temperocentrism*, which he defines as a view of the past as "a quaint time when things were better, unlike today, when the world is uniquely contentious." Having set up a straw man, the author proceeds to demonstrate the realism and narrative flow of turn-of-the-century crime reporting. ("'I'm shot! She's killed me!' she screamed.") Having done this, Lotz concludes that the New Journalism of Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, Tom Wolfe, and others "is not new at all, for it was common in the days before objectivity came to be prized."

Another shorthand expression employed by the author is the "hypodermic needle theory" of mass media and its effects." According to this theory, he writes, "mass media effects are uniform, direct, and powerful, because the stimuli are strong and the atomized audience receiving them is virtually powerless to resist. It is as if the messages were injected into the brain." Lotz finds this theory ingenious and provocative, but misguided —appealing "to people not well versed in mass communication research."

Instead, Lotz prefers to believe that people are not

"atomized" at all. Readers and viewers still rely on families, friends, personal experiences, and convenient sterotypes in making judgments about crime. Having spent the first third of the book demonstrating the futility of "most, if not all" of the existing theories, Lotz can then proceed with presumably more dispassionate observations.

Some of the tidbits of information offered up by Lotz are more interesting from a historical standpoint than others, and may or may not be true. He claims, for example, that the inverted pyramid form of newspaper writing was invented during the Civil War by correspondents fearful that the telegraph wires would either be cut or break down. He also argues for the "erosion" of newspaper column "vitality" during the nineteenth century, noting that "few columnists from that century are still remembered, aside from Mark Twain and a few of his fellow humorists."

Concerning more current events, Lotz asserts "that crime news these days does not delve into the grossly offensive such as cannibalism, disembowelments, and the like." In this regard, Lotz quotes Ben Bagdikian's observation that the "comfortable suburbanites" who are the targets of today's advertisers and newspaper chains disdain blood and gore. This line of reasoning may have to be rethought in view of the reports of cannibalism in Milwaukee.

In an anecdotal style of writing, some punchlines work and others do not. For example, Lotz remembers living "in an era before psychology displaced moral philosophy." So do I. On the other hand, the author's assertion that "conservatives do not become very upset" about child abuse seems beyond the fringe.

Lotz does seem very sure about one thing—that newspapers "routinely undermine defendants' rights" and violate American Bar Association guidelines in doing so. Without questioning the validity of the guidelines, Lotz then concludes that "in this area, the press deserves the criticism directed at it and more." Shame! Shame!

. . . Richard Scheidenhelm
Boulder, Colorado

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JOURNALISM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: ONLINE INFORMATION, ELECTRONIC DATABASES, AND THE NEWS.
By Tom Koch.
• Praeger
• 1991, 374 pp.
• $45, Cloth; $17.95, Paper

BY NOW MOST journalists have traded in their typewriters for the more modern tools of the computer age. For good or bad, the proliferation of computer technology in the newsroom has brought tremendous change to the craft of journalism.

But Tom Koch contends that we have only seen the beginning of the way computers will change the journalist's job. In *Journalism for the 21st Century*, Koch predicts computers will not only let journalists work more efficiently, but expand well beyond their present roles in society.

Koch subscribes to the notion that today's journalist is merely a mouthpiece for government and corporate and community leaders who distribute the press releases, call the news conferences, and dispense self-serving soundbites. Journalists mostly rely on these "officials"—the mayor, the company PR director, or the university president—for their information. The result, says Koch, is news that lacks perspective and context.

This will change, Koch says, as more news organizations subscribe to and use electronic databases and online information services. These tools, which provide access to electronically stored information on virtually any topic imaginable, will empower journalists to obtain information independently, without having to rely entirely on the "official" word. By skillfully using electronic databases to search for and retrieve background information, the journalist will actively gather information, rather than merely react to what public figures say. Koch argues that this access will create a better-informed journalist who can ask tougher, more intelligent questions of any source on any topic.

Throughout much of the book, Koch adopts a somewhat paternal stance, as if taking the reader by the hand and saying, "Listen, I'll tell you what *really* happened." Most of the book is devoted to Koch's unmasking media misrepresentations of everything from malpractice insurance to the Soviet downing of KAL Flight 007. Unfortunately, he does not take nearly as much time to support his premise that electronic databases will correct these shortcomings.

As a historical work, Koch's book offers little new information. He cites parallels between the printing revolution of the eighteenth century and the rise of electronic information systems, but little more.

The historical researcher may enjoy the chapters in which Koch explains how to use some of the popular on-line information services. Perhaps the most valuable information in the book is his insight on performing efficient electronic searches by carefully constructing the "search phrases" that tell on-line systems what you want to find. Formulating good search phrases, Koch predicts, "will become as much a part of the newswriter's repertoire as typing is today."

Journalism for the 21st Century puts forward some interesting theories on how computers will affect journalism, but fails to provide sufficient basis to support them. For the limited information the historian may find to improve his or her computer database skills, trudging through the rest of the book hardly seems worthwhile. Koch raises some interesting questions, but, much like the journalists described in his book, he provides few real answers.

...Jim Foust
Bowling Green State Univ.

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IDA B. WELLS-BARNETT: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF AN AMERICAN BLACK WOMAN, 1893–1930.
By Mildred I. Thompson.
• Carlson
• 1990, 328 pp.
• $65, Cloth

THIS EXPLORATORY study of the noted African-American editor and writer Ida B. Wells-Barnett sheds light on the race, class, and gender issues that surrounded the community-based and national African-American organizations and political alliances that formed in the period 1893–1930. It offers a glimpse of Wells-Barnett's character and a smattering of vignettes about her seeming vulnerability in various social situations. However, readers hoping to better understand Ida Wells-Barnett, the person and professional journalist, may be somewhat disappointed because this study barely goes beyond what is already widely documented.

Mildred Thompson brings together important manuscripts, public documents, and interviews to form the beginnings of a social history about Wells-Barnett and her contemporaries. The study does not purport to discuss Wells-Barnett as a journalist. Rather its objectives were to bring together data on Wells-Barnett, to describe her various contributions to black civic and social progress, to determine if her recordings about herself were true, to explain her former lack of recognition by historians, and to explore her relationships.

While the author generally meets her objectives, the book does not go far enough. A balanced picture of the private and professional Wells-Barnett is yet to be provided. In this volume, like others before it, Wells-Barnett is portrayed as an angry, wrathful crusader, tirelessly fighting injustice. Thompson's book chronicles the life of an individual who somehow manages to remain strong and steadfast in the face of ongoing social horrors that received little redress. Wells-Barnett spent much of her career as an advocate for stronger antilynching laws in the United States. She spent the rest of her time on other civil rights issues, such as poverty, employment discrimination, and political representation. Such continuous contemplation of adverse social conditions would strain even the most tenacious public figure. In fact, one would expect that most public figures of Wells-Barnett's stature would

frequently seek the counsel of peers and describe dissatisfaction with an unbending social system.

Thompson occasionally mentions the personal challenges Wells-Barnett faced, but generally does not elaborate on Wells-Barnett's perceptions or the reactions of her peers. For example, Thompson says that Wells-Barnett "was not an organization personality. She could not merely participate. Neither could she abide by the rules of compromise" (130). What conclusion is to be drawn from this brief statement of Wells-Barnett's behavior? Many of Thompson's statements are tantalizing, but the reader is left with no details to support her theories. Reporting on a speech Wells-Barnett made in 1898 at the Afro-American Council, for example, Thompson concludes that "dissension between these opposing factions was precipitated by the speech of Wells-Barnett." What did Wells-Barnett in fact say? Thompson never tells us.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett is one volume in Carlson Publishing's sixteen-volume set on black women's history. Despite its shortcomings, it represents an important contribution to the fields of history and journalism. For example, Thompson competently researches the political climate of Wells-Barnett's era using newspapers, house organs, pamphlets, and periodicals.

Thompson should be commended for working meticulously to locate columns and articles by and about Ida B. Wells-Barnett. Using more than thirty different newspapers and periodicals, including the *Nashville Daily American, Chicago Inter-Ocean, Literary Digest, Washington Bee, Memphis Commercial Appeal, New York Times,* and the *Cleveland Plaindealer.* Thompson managed to verify Wells-Barnett's experiences throughout her newspaper career. Also, Thompson found correspondence to and from Wells-Barnett in the personal papers of a number of her contemporaries, such as the abolitionist Frederick Douglass and Memphis judge Albion W. Tourgee.

Thompson's book offers a rich selection of Wells-Barnett's poignant writings. Key essays, including all of Wells-Barnett's periodical contributions, can be found in the appendix of the book. Of particular interest is the essay on Booker T. Washington. Since Wells-Barnett rarely strayed from the lynching theme in her writings, the Washington essay offers a slightly different perspective on her thinking. It analyzes the political rivalry between Washington and his critics from a woman's point of view.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett offers rich research possibilities for journalism students and historians. It is easily accessible to undergraduate students as well as a great idea starter for graduate students. One topic of research would be a comparison of coverage in the mainstream newspapers and the Associated Press to that in the black press, for at the turn of the century the mainstream news organizations gave significant coverage to Chicago's black politicians. Another topic would be the coverage given Wells-Barnett's second England tour in 1894.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett lays the necessary groundwork for researchers who want to understand some of the organizational aspects of African-American civil-rights advocates in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It provides an overview of Wells-Barnett's life as a journalist and offers a wealth of ideas for future research.

. . . *Nora Hall*
University of Minnesota

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CENTRAL IDEAS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN JOURNALISM: A NARRATIVE HISTORY.
By Marvin Olasky.
• Lawrence Erlbaum
• 1991, 208 pp.
• $34.50, Cloth

THIS GLOBAL ACCOUNT of American journalism is a political argument thinly disguised as an overarching theoretical framework that will stand neither the tests of evidence nor of time. Olasky divides journalism into three dominant modes of inquiry (macro-stories): 1) the official story, 2) the corruption story, and 3) the oppression story.

Olasky concerns himself primarily with corruption versus oppression, praising editors who focus on corruption for recognizing that man is sinful and that significant alterations in society can come only through personal change. Editors such as Horace Greeley and Joseph Pulitzer, he claims, rejected the "theology" of those who focused on corruption. Olasky's claims far exceed his evidence: he argues that those who "embraced" the corruption story "invented much of what we associate with modern journalism at its best: A sense of purpose, a willingness to oppose arrogant rulers, and a stress on accuracy and specific detail."

Olasky conveniently rewrites history in order to support his own theology. Without citation, he argues that Zenger put into practice ideas about the sovereignty of God that he learned in the Dutch Reformed Church and took on the immoral William Cosby, ignoring the fact that Zenger was a printer and that James Alexander was far more responsible for the content of the *New York Journal* than was Zenger. Further, Olasky laces his historical account with terms such as *investigative reporting* that were coined only in modern times.

The stars of the colonial period, in Olasky's evaluation, are those with a firm faith in God—the Puritan Mathers and Sam Adams. Again without citation, Olasky paints Adams as favoring "investigative reporting and appropriate emotional appeal because he wanted readers to know about and *care about* attempts to take away their freedom, political and religious." Olasky further argues that Adams rejected destructive revolutionary acts. Olasky dismisses ideas of which he disapproves with a bare mention, then finds a single quotation to support his own view, coming to an astute but faulty conclusion. Many of the quotes are from secondary sources, with no description of how widely read Olasky is in the primary sources.

The American Revolution was a "defense of established rights" but the French Revolution was a "Star Trek," proving, in Olasky's framework, that systemic social change is doomed to fail. Couched thus in religious terms, Olasky reveals quite clearly his belief that good religion and conservative social systems go hand in hand. In such an historical account of the colonial and early national period, printers and statesmen such as Benjamin Franklin, as well as his extensive network of printers, are dismissed with a mere mention.

During the Penny Press period, Day and Wisner succeed with the *Sun* because of their Christian principles and experience, as well as their emphasis on "corruption." It is during this period that Olasky claims the real threat to "journalism's long tradition" came. "Increasingly," he writes, "liberal theologians began to proclaim that man was not inherently sinful, and that if man's environment were changed, man himself could become perfect. A host of panaceas, ranging from diet change (meat was out, graham flour was in) to the abolition of private property, became popular as ways of changing mankind." Greeley is condemned as a socialist while Henry Raymond's qualities are praised because he viewed "individual and church action as efficacious." Again, Olasky mixes the present with the past, equating Greeley with "some elite American journalists of recent times." He claims that his personal life disintegrated as his desire for social change increased.

Olasky's account of Civil War journalism once again supports his own theology. Although he does not directly blame the war on northern editors such as Greeley, he claims that "any possibility for a peaceful resolution disappeared when anti-slavery journalism moved from corruption story grounds of sadly dealing with sinful man, to an oppression story vision of eradicating slavery as the first step toward social revolution and class warfare." Olasky says the role of the press should not be overstated, but then overstates the case: "[I]f we examine the four alternative ways of fighting slavery that existed at one

time, and then see which one was seized on by some leading journalists, that press role does seem large." Olasky champions the "Christian journalism" of the *New York World* and again condemns Greeley's *Tribune*, claiming it had a grip on the emotions of the public. "The *Tribune*," Olasky writes, "of course, was not responsible for the Civil War. Journalism was one compelling force among many, and the *Tribune* was one newspaper among many. But if the *Tribune* and its followers had seen the South as a culture and not as the potential arena for class struggle between slave owners and a combined poor White/Black coalition, it seems likely that a wiser course could have been followed." In this account, Andrew Johnson during Reconstruction becomes not a "scoundrel," but a president who recognized his "responsibility to defend the Constitution against radical attempts to establish dictatorship."

The latter part of the nineteenth century becomes an attempt by elite journalists to control the political agenda—to "locate social problems in the environment rather than in man himself." Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, as well as the muckrakers, are denounced by Olasky for their proselytizing "for causes of the left." Olasky claims that many of the muckrakers were Hearst and Pulitzer alumni. All are lumped together, with little attention to the many subtle differences in how the muckrakers evaluated society and possible reforms.

Olasky ends his account with a one-paragraph summary of the twentieth century, arguing that what became most ironic during the period "was the tendency of many journalists to apologize for and promote new forms of oppression, while claiming that they were fighting for liberty." About fifty pages of appendices follow the 123-page account. In the appendices, Olasky describes "Journalism Historians and Religion," claiming that early historians such as Isaiah Thomas and Frederic Hudson, because they were not Christian believers, "tended to be embarrassed by the origins of American journalistic practice." *Journalism Quarterly*, begun in the inter-war period, Olasky claims, "ignored the Reformation origins of American journalism," although one article "did go on at great length about an early deistic editor." He further claims that Edwin Emery's text, *The Press and America*, was successful not because of its ease of presentation, but "because the text's liberalism, materialism, and emphasis on class struggle fit perfectly with academic orthodoxy of recent decades."

Olasky's contention that the religious origins of journalism have been neglected by historians is correct, but scholars such as David Paul Nord and Judith Buddenbaum have begun to rectify that neglect in a responsible way.

In his methodological notes (appendix C), Olasky seems to feel the need to defend his methodology, and chooses to do so by defending a qualitative versus a quantitative approach and then arguing that every journalist, as well as every historian, writes from his own "world view." Olasky concludes that "The concept of *macrostory*, in short, cuts against recent ideas of journalistic objectivity by noting that reporters put news stories in narrative frameworks chosen in relation to world views." Olasky has made this defense before when challenged on his highly argumentative histories. What Olasky fails to note is that *his* world view deliberately excludes not only certain types of evidence, but diminishes explanation to a simplistic, conservative religious point of view, excluding many of the peoples of history as well as the complexity of the society about which he writes. Neither blacks, nor immigrants, nor women are actors on Olasky's stage.

Certainly Olasky is correct that historical evidence is interpreted within a writer's world view. But what he fails to recognize is the difference between interpretation through such a prism and the process of selecting only evidence that supports an exclusive and intolerant intellectual framework. One

has to wonder what review process was used in the evaluation of this work, which can only be described as a polemic rather than a work of academic scholarship. In the acknowledgments, Olasky thanks Lawrence Erlbaum for "their admirable tolerance for decidedly non-trendy ideas." The issue is not one of trendiness. It is an issue of scholarship.

. . . Jean Folkerts
George Washington Univ.

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A HISTORY OF BRITISH PUBLISHING.
By John Feather.
• Routledge
• 1991, 304 pp.
• $15.95, Paper

AS JOHN FEATHER (professor of library and information studies at Loughborough University) states in the preface, his book is strictly a history of British publishing and not a history of the book trade in Britain. In the first edition (published in 1988) and now in a slightly emended paperback edition, his objective is "to show how British publishing has developed over the last five hundred years, and to explain why it has taken the directions in which it has travelled, in short how it came to be what it is today . . . one of Britain's major earners of foreign exchange" (ix). Hence, the four major themes of this study are: (1) the organizational role of the publishers; (2) the central importance of copyright to the publishing industry ("Copyright is the cornerstone of publishing in a free-market economy."); (3) the "commercial imperatives" and "mechanisms" of publishing; and (4) publishers' work "with and against censors" during five centuries of publishing (viii).

Following a brief introduction (which summarizes the book trade before the development of typographical printing during the latter half of the fifteenth century in Europe), Feather covers the history of publishing in four parts: (1) "The Press in Chains 1476–1695"; (2) "License and Liberty 1695–1800"; (3) "The First of the Mass Media 1800–1900"' and (4) "The Trade in the Twentieth Century." Part 1 consists of short chapters dealing with (a) "The Book of Revolution"—Johann Gutenberg's invention, the spread of the printed word slowly to the fringes of Europe, and especially the establishment of printing in England by William Caxton and his successors and the role of the "King's Printer"; (b) "Books in the Marketplace"—the development of "patterns of publishing" and, by the end of the sixteenth century, of literature as a commercial commodity, and the emergence of the professional author, who, like the professional publisher, was "a product of the age of the printed book"; (c) "The Foundation of an Industry"—the development of new mechanisms such as the Stationers Company of London to organize and regulate publishing; (d) "A Taste of Freedom"—the experience of press and publishing during the English Civil War and its immediate aftermath and the iron shackles they endured under Cromwell and his army from the late 1640s until 1660; and (e) "The Licensed Press"—the role of the Printing Act of 1662 in restoring "licensing" of the press and publishers and confining publishing to London and the Oxbridge universities.

Part 2 deals with the publishing trade's response to the non-renewal of the Printing Act in 1695. The Copyright Act of 1710 was a landmark, but did not lead to major changes in publishing trade practices. It was "a book-sellers' act not an authors' act" (75). Nevertheless, the eighteenth century was a period of great growth for British publishing, and English law did nail down the principle that an author "created a piece of property when he wrote a book" (81). Indeed, copyright legislation is the subject of Feather's chapter on "Trade and the Law," which also emphasizes the "accelerated development of the newspaper" from the 1690s on. The first successful daily newspaper, the *Daily Courant*, began publication in 1702 and very soon had rivals. Although the pamphlet, not the newspaper, continued to be the important medium of political propa-

ganda during the first half of the eighteenth century, "newspapers became an integral part of the political and social fabric" of the nation during the 1700s. And, it was Queen Anne's chief minister, Robert Harley, who at the beginning of the eighteenth century "established the pattern of relationships between governments and the newspaper press which was to persist in Britain until the reign of Queen Victoria" (85–86). Harley also instituted taxation of printed matter as a means of prepublication censorship), a form of control that lasted until the first half of the nineteenth century. The chapter on the vast expansion of the economy after 1730, which made Britain the world's first industrial society, deals with the development of the novel, the beginnings of leisure publishing for children, and such new serial publications as the magazine and the "part book." In "Publishers and Booksellers," Feather notes that the mid-1770s marked "the end of an era in the formerly ordered world of London publishing" (117). This period saw the emergence of such established booksellers and publishers as the Rivingtons, the John Murrays, the Longmans, and the Hatchards.

By 1800, change was in the air for the publishing trade, but it was in a much better condition than it had been at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Part 3 describes the challenge of producing for a mass audience during the nineteenth century. The first chapter, on "The Book Trade and the Industrial Revolution," shows how the problem of mechanizing book and newspaper production was resolved, in large part by the technical developments that increased paper production. Newspaper printing also had to deal with the problem of mechanizing typesetting, which was not really resolved until 1890 by the development of the Linotype (itself replaced by computer systems during the late 1970s). The chapter on "The Organization of the Trade in the Nineteenth Century" tells how some publishing firms (Macmillan, Cassell, Routledge, and Chambers) expanded and prospered as a result of daring and efficient management. In the succeeding chapters on "The Age of the Novel," "The Diffusion of Knowledge," and "The Publishers and the Authors," Feather incisively illustrates how, by the end of the nineteenth century, the printed word became the medium of mass communication and how free competition, an expanding market, and efficient technologies provided enterprising publishers with unlimited opportunites to expand and prosper, especially through the publication of fiction.

In part 4, Feather provides a very informative survey of "The Customs of the Trade," "Old Ways and New Directions," "Allen Lane's Idea" (the paperback revolution), and "The Trade in War and Peace" in twentieth century publishing. Finally, this superb history is enriched by copious informative endnotes, an excellent eighteen-page bibliography, and a serviceable index. John Feather deserves a "well done" for crafting what is a definitive source on the history of British publishing.

. . . J. O. Baylen (emeritus)
Eastbourne, England

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SYMBOLS, THE NEWS MAGAZINES, AND MARTIN LUTHER KING.
By Richard Lentz.
• Louisiana State University Press
• 1990, 384 pp.
• $29.95, Cloth

IN MODERN AMERICA, Richard Lentz says, the nation's values—certainly its understanding of those values associated with specific events and symbolic personages—increasingly have become the province of journalistic institutions. News reports, printed or broadcast, put flesh upon abstractions. And, he adds, one need look no further than the civil rights movement to grasp this principle.

The most visible individual in the civil rights movement of the fifties and sixties was probably Martin Luther King. He was involved in most of the major civil rights activities, from the 1952–53 bus boycotts

in Birmingham to the 1968 sanitation workers' strike in Memphis. Making sense of King's passage from reform to radicalism in those two decades was the special province of the news magazines that regularly tried to interpret events for middle-class Americans.

Using *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *U.S. News and World Report*, Lentz looks at the editorial philosophies (cultural values) of each publication and its publisher to see how those values are reflected in the way each magazine reports the events and, thus, creates symbolic status for the individuals involved in the news events. For instance, *Newsweek* is labeled as the liberal, left-of-center publication and the voice of progressive reform. *Time*, the centrist publication, is viewed as politically conservative and idealistic. *U.S. News* is seen as right of center and committed to conservative ideology.

Reports by the national news magazines helped establish King as the symbol of the nonviolent civil rights movement in the South. The reports also made Bull Connors (commissioner of the Birmingham fire and police department) of the South the ultimate symbol of "blind, cruel segregation." However, when King moved from the South to the larger stage of national and international events, he was then seen by the magazines as beyond his limits. When King was given the Nobel Prize, which thrust him into the international limelight, he began to oppose the war in Vietnam, advocate a ban on nuclear weapons, and express concerns for the poor worldwide. With this move, the news magazines began to express doubts about King's ability to coordinate an international effort. All of the publications suggested that he was beyond his limits in both knowledge and abilities in humanitarian reform efforts.

However, when he moved back to the South and the labor dispute in Memphis, he was once again restored to his status as being at the "top of the mountain" (a reference to his speech in that city in which he said he had been to the mountaintop and "had seen the Promised Land"). At the time of his death in Memphis, and while planning the Poor People's Campaign in Washington, the news magazines were beginning to show that King had moved from a posture of nonviolence to one of radicalism in his approach to social problems. However, after his death, he was again elevated to the "mountaintop," with the permanent status of icon.

This book is a massive effort that certainly gives a new look at the role of news magazines in transmitting national news events and the role that publications might, or might not, play in establishing the symbolic status of participants in events.

However, the greater question must be: Do the media have the power to bestow symbolic status on individuals? If so, do these publications filter the news through their preconceived cultural values (editorial policies) and thereby establish those values, and symbolic status, in the minds of their readers? So many social, political, and cultural factors go into the establishing of values by the individual that it becomes almost impossible to determine the impact of one—a news magazine—in this spectrum.

Since the three news magazines seem to have widely differing views of the purpose of the civil rights movement and the status of individuals involved, it is possible that middle-class readers, to whom the magazines address themselves, might subscribe to the news magazine that most closely represents their personal values. And, therefore, the individual reader might have preferred *Newsweek* because it was "liberal," *Time* because it was middle-of-the-road, or *U.S. News* because it was conservative. If this is the case, news magazines would not be establishing values and bestowing symbolic status (setting the agenda) but, on the other hand, reinforcing values already established by their readers.

Under any of these circumstances, this is an excellent review of the civil rights activities of Martin Luther King as reported by the three leading news magazines. It is thor-

oughly and completely researched and worth the time and effort to read.

... Perry J. Ashley
University of South Carolina

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SHIFTING TIME AND SPACE: THE STORY OF VIDEOTAPE.
By Eugene Marlow and Eugene Secunda.
• Praeger
• 1991, 192 pp.
• $39.95, Cloth

NO ONE WHO has seen the endlessly repeated beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles police officers and the resulting furor would dispute the power of videotape to recreate moments and powerfully document events. Though complaints about police brutality in that city had repeatedly made headlines, it took an amateur's videotape to prove contentions many had made and bring the officers to trial.

That incident—and others—exemplify why *Shifting Time and Space* is an opportune book on a timely and important subject. The authors correctly point out that since its introduction in 1956, the videotape recorder has evolved from a broadcast television tool that gave meaning to the word "prerecorded" to a pervasive technology giving end users control over their viewing patterns.

This shift from studio to user has been to the detriment of the networks, the dismay of television advertisers, and the delight of the cable and home video industries. The proliferation of videotape has translated into the fragmentation of the audience. One of the intriguing cultural effects of videotapes is the miniaturization of television technology and the rise of the 8-mm camcorder, the ultimate personal extension of the use of videotape, with its effect of making the self "real" by the act of putting oneself on television.

Important as videotape technology is, it is arguable whether it has "forever altered America's sense of reality" (xi), the premise of this book. On its way to becoming a new means of information diffusion, spinning off industries oriented around it, videotape has, however, fundamentally changed the media marketplace. It opened up a new venue for the storage and distribution of recorded material in business and industry as well as in homes. But its existence has not yet "reordered the multilevel corporate organization to the potential detriment of middle management authority" (150), as the authors claim, at least in most businesses.

Despite these overly broad assertions there is a good book, an important book, somewhere in these two hundred pages. Unfortunately, *Shifting Time and Space* is sometimes a rather disjointed, sloppy effort on a topic that deserves better treatment—the evolution, diffusion, and impact of videotape technology on broadcasting, cable, business and homes. It sometimes reads as if it were written by a committee. For instance, the first chapter takes on important theoretical issues about the power of communications technology to shape whatever it touches. But it does so by stringing together long quotations from Postman, McLuhan, and Innis, with flourishes from Gimpel, Kuhn, and Rogers, in a time-space diffusion mush.

Following a review of the history of magnetic recording and the networks, subsequent chapters trace industry developments, sometimes using confusing and inadequately labeled charts and graphs, generally lifted from other publications. Some sections of the book are lucid and insightful, but poor writing in other places leans toward tired writing devices such as beginning paragraphs with questions, or stringing quotations together, or aggregating statistics without context.

Despite its problems, this book has value, especially in its recounting of the technological and economic development of videotape and VCRs. This saga offers yet another example of Yankee ingenuity gone wrong, as major companies decided to import consumer electronics products that had been invented here, as early as the mid-1960s. There is also value in the decade-by-decade tracking of the phenomenal growth of videotape, which made

possible a household penetration of cable and VCRs of more than 50 percent within a dozen years. The authors effectively track the largely unheralded effects of this technology on broadcast, on cable, and on our homes, once the cost of VCRs dropped from thirteen hundred dollars in 1976 to two hundred by this decade. This is in itself a valuable contribution to the field and a useful guide for future research.

We have not yet seen the end of videotape, especially as it becomes integrated with other media technologies such as CD-ROMs and made available through fiber optic lines. However, it remains for others to extend what Marlow and Secunda have done, and to put the videotape's impact in proper industrial, economic and social context.

... Sandra Haarsager
University of Idaho

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LETTERS OF EUGENE V. DEBS.
Edited by J. Robert Constantine.
• University of Illinois Press
• 1990; Vol. 1, 632 pp.; Vol. 2, 560 pp.; Vol. 3, 642 pp.
• $120, Cloth

EUGENE V. DEBS was, for many, the embodiment of American socialism. He gained national notoriety for organizing the American Railway Union in the 1890s—and six months in prison as a result of the Pullman strike. Debs went to jail a Democrat, emerged a Populist, and soon joined the nascent socialist movement. He devoted the remainder of his life to the socialist cause as a speaker, journalist, and five-time presidential candidate (1900, 1904, 1908, 1912, and, from his Atlanta prison cell, 1920).

Debs inspired intense loyalty from the rank-and-file of the socialist and labor movements he served. Debs was his party's most popular speaker. During the 1908 campaign alone, Debs gave hundreds of speeches over a two-month campaign. Many of the letters in this collection attest to the deep affection he elicited, to his effectiveness as a socialist propagandist, and to the often-strained relations between Debs and the party hierarchy.

But Debs was not only a popular speaker and perennial candidate, he was a prolific journalist throughout most of his adult life—from his editorship of the *Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen's Magazine* through his association with the *Appeal to Reason* and *Debs Magazine*. Debs saw the press as central to the labor movement's progress. "All the big papers are being gobbled up by the 'interests,'" Debs wrote another journalist in 1907. "They understand the value of the press. Wish that the Socialists and the working class in general understood it only half so well" (1:251).

Debs was also a prolific letter-writer, and it was his policy to answer every letter he received. However, Debs systematically destroyed the bulk of this correspondence to save office space, preserving only letters judged particularly important or "fine and beautiful" (1:xxxi).

In these three volumes, Constantine has selected nearly fourteen hundred letters from the roughly ten thousand letters extant. (Most of the other surviving letters can be found in *The Papers of Eugene V. Debs 1834–1945* (Microfilm, 1983), also edited by Constantine. The abundant annotations in this collection often refer to those letters, or to letters and articles published in newspapers and magazines across the country.) The preface explains that these letters were selected to illuminate Debs's "public career and his private life, the variety of interests and issues in which he was engaged, and his relationship with the many prominent men and women (and children) of his time" (1:xxxii). Each volume contains a detailed index (which could, however, have benefited from more careful proofreading as a few page numbers are transposed). Slightly more than half the letters were written by Debs, with another 8 percent written by Debs's brother (and assistant) Theodore, or his wife. The remaining 40 percent are by correspondents ranging from AFL president Samuel Gompers to a twelve-year-old girl who wrote to express her desire that Debs would

soon be released from prison, and to ask if he were a Baptist.

Following a brief, forty-one page biographical sketch, volume 1 opens with a letter Debs sent his parents shortly before his nineteenth birthday. The letters (and occasional poems to his sister and father) quickly widen in scope as Debs becomes increasingly prominent in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and, later, in politics. Some letters, however, seem to have been included less for their intrinsic interest than for the prominence of the correspondents. The letters are not edited, though annotations identify (where possible) the correspondents, explain obscure references, and occasionally refer to other relevant materials. The annotations (and indeed the biographical sketch) are useful, but are largely unsourced and often imprecise.

Although Debs appears to have actually edited the Locomotive Firemen's and American Railway Union journals, he "edited" the *Appeal to Reason*, the *Rip-Saw*, *Debs Magazine*, and other socialist journals from afar. Debs wrote prolifically for these journals—on socialist theory, labor struggles, and the failures of the capitalist system—and solicited articles from others (sometimes forwarding their articles to the editor himself). But he only rarely visited the editorial offices, and had little direct involvement in the papers' management. Even *Debs Magazine*, which took his name without his consent (though he later signed on), was edited by others—who on at least one occasion took the liberty of running over Debs's signature articles that he had not written. On another occasion, the editor of the party's *Eye-Opener* wrote to apologize for "scalping" two of Debs's articles: "Since we are making the world safe for democracy, the editor in chief of the Socialist Press is a fellow from Texas, A. S. Burleson . . . we are obliged to get out a sort of milk and water sheet" (2:341).

But Debs spoke under the papers' auspices across the country, in often-grueling speaking tours that sorely taxed his health. These tours not only promoted the newspapers and the socialist movement, they boosted circulation as well. Both the *Rip-Saw* and the *Appeal* required local sponsors to purchase blocks of subscriptions as part of Debs's speaking fee. The *Appeal to Reason*, in particular, relied upon these tours to build its subscription list—and paid Debs what was for the time a generous salary (though Debs frequently felt compelled to point out that the thousand dollars monthly covered his brother's as well as his own salary and the expenses of running their Terre Haute office).

Debs's articles were frequently reprinted by socialist and labor papers alike, and many an editor wrote Debs upon launching a fund-raising campaign for an article on the importance of the socialist press. When, for example, the *New York Daily Call* was launched, Debs spoke at a mass meeting called to celebrate the occasion and contributed an article on "The Power of the Press" to its first issue.

Among the letters gathered here are several to (and from) socialist and muckraking journalists, in which Debs criticized inaccuracies and deviations from socialist principles, discussed collaborations, and reviewed the progress of the socialist press. Many of these contained effusive praise. For example, in 1912, Debs wrote H. G. Creel: "You have dipped your pen into your own heart, and if your readers are not roused to the pitch of revolt against capitalism it is certainly not your fault" (1:463).

Though they were intended as private correspondence, the letters may well reflect Debs's awareness that he had become a public figure. As one correspondent noted, their letters were prone to end up in the press—or in the hands of the authorities. "I wonder whether that ought not to make one a little theatrical in one's correspondence[,] because one feels that he is not writing for one, but for an audience?" (3:30)

Yet this collection is a valuable compilation of letters touching upon a wide range of Debs's activities, both in its own right and as an introduc-

tion to the material likely to be discovered in Debs's papers (and related collections). The letters open a window on Debs's often-overlooked journalistic career, as well as touching on the many difficulties (financial, legal, and factional) facing the socialist and labor press—primarily the English-language press. There is also correspondence with editors of foreign-language socialist periodicals that sheds new light on the vital role played in particular by the Yiddish press and other Jewish socialist institutions in sustaining the Socialist party after the disastrous post-war splits.

Above all, they offer a window into the American socialist and labor movements at what was perhaps the peak of their influence.

... *Jon Bekken*
SUNY at Cortlandt

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FORERUNNERS OF REVOLUTION: MUCKRAKERS AND THE AMERICAN SOCIAL CONSCIENCE.
By Walter M. Brasch.
• University Press of America
• 1990, 208 pp.
• $38, Cloth; $18.50, Paper

THIS TEXT EXAMINES the muckraking period in U.S. history, specifically the years 1890 to 1915. More importantly, it presents in a straightforward style glimpses of journalists and editors who were considered radical because of their departure from standard journalistic practices. As the author points out, "They were the finest journalists of the era, well-educated writers who cared about the society and the people they wrote about. Many had college degrees, at a time when the average American had a fifth grade education; many had studied philosophy and the creative arts in Europe. Many were socialists, seeing the problems of capitalist America not in its people, but in the social, political, and economic systems that had allowed for exploitation."

Although the reader may have read about these journalists and editors in other texts, this book should not go unnoticed. Indeed, because its treatment in certain chapters reminds one of Louis Filler's *Crusaders for Liberalism* (Harcourt, Brace, 1939), it and Filler's should be required reading in certain courses.

The text contains nine chapters. Chapter 1, "Killing the Revolution," presents a succinct historical analysis of the social and political injustices that occurred in the United States during this period. These social and political injustices caused certain journalists to examine the impropriety and the graft of their age. Chapter 2, "The People's Champions," looks at the publishers and editors who were responsible for promoting this particular kind of journalism. Chapter 3 is devoted to Samuel S. McClure and his *McClure's Magazine*, which promoted the muckraking of journalists such as Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell, and Ray Stannard Baker.

In the next few chapters, Brasch discusses how the movement grew to other newspapers and magazines; in chapter 8 he provides reasons why the muckraking period died. In chapter 9 the author discusses recent "muckraking" journalists, including Jack Anderson, Drew Pearson, I. F. Stone, Jessica Mitford, Rachel Carson, and Ralph Nader. He even mentions the CBS program "Sixty Minutes." This chapter raises the question of why Brasch included a chapter on modern investigative reporters who may or may not be classified muckraking journalists. Even though it is easy to see what Brasch was attempting to do, the last chapter is not necessary.

Overall, however, the text is well written and concise and adds to the literature.

... *Edd Applegate*
Middle Tennessee State Univ.

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EQUAL TO THE OCCASION: WOMEN EDITORS OF THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY WEST.
By Sherilyn Cox Bennion.
• University of Nevada Press
• 1990, 225 pp.
• $24.95, Cloth

WHATEVER DAMAGE films and television may do to the story of the development of the western

United States, one thing they generally get right: the frontier was predominantly a male preserve. Even as late as 1890, the census showed three men for every two women in the western states and territories, and earlier the numbers were even more pronounced.

In 1850, the western states had nearly three men for every woman and California, where Sherilyn Cox Bennion's *Equal to the Occasion* begins, had a whopping 92 percent male population. It was into this masculine stronghold in 1854 that Sarah Moore Clarke ventured with her editorial pen to establish the *Contra Costa*. Like most western publications, the Oakland-based *Contra Costa* was relatively short-lived, but, coming only eight years after the first West Coast newspaper, it showed that women in the West might be few, but that they could be articulate.

Clarke is the first of nearly two dozen editors that Bennion profiles in *Equal to the Occasion*, doing for western women what Susan Henry did for colonial women in journalism and Marion Marzolf did for women journalists more generally. A labor not only of scholarship but clearly of love, as well, because Bennion devoted many a summer vacation to traveling the region in search of her editors, *Equal to the Occasion* extends our knowledge and understanding of the role of women in the development of both journalism and the West.

Bennion's research yielded 230 women editors in twelve of the thirteen western states, including two in Hawaii, between 1854 and 1900. A valuable appendix lists the women she discovered and shows the location of copies of their publications, if any are to be found. Twenty-eight pages of illustrations enhance the volume.

From this list Bennion selected a variety of editors for a group portrait, organizing her discussion according to the kinds of publications they edited: general newspapers, publications supporting causes such as suffrage and temperance, religious and medical periodicals, and literary journals. For each genre of periodical the author offers a context, pointing to national and regional developments that contributed to the establishment of a particular kind of publication.

Emphasizing the diversity and individualism of the women editors, Bennion chose her subjects to show the range of ages, backgrounds, and interests of the women. Which editors she chose to chronicle was also dictated by availability of information about them and by the existence of at least one copy of each publication, because she wanted to be able to assess what the women published for herself.

For the most part, the women profiled in *Equal to the Occasion* were unknown beyond their immediate spheres. Exceptions include Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who edited the paper of the Pacific Coast Women's Press Association in the 1890s before moving to the East, where she became known as a writer and reformer. Millicent Washburn Shinn, editor for eleven years of the western literary publication the *Overland Monthly*, published in San Francisco, undoubtedly also had some repute beyond her home city.

Generally, however, they were like Ada Chase Merritt, a household name in Salmon, Idaho, where she published her paper, but unknown beyond that limited circle except to a few of her fellow small-town editors. Or like Maggie and Ellis Shipp, two of the four wives of Mormon Bard Shipp, both of whom received medical degrees (as did their husband) and who published the *Salt Lake Sanitarian* for a few months.

Bennion prefers to think of these women as individuals, but the reader is also struck by similarities. Most were middle class, most had some formal schooling, and most operated their publications on their own, without direction from a husband or other male. Because of the dearth of information—a common handicap when dealing with the obscure—none of the women individually quite comes alive. Had the author elected to draw a composite picture in her final chapter, instead of summarizing the group

portrait, she might have given us a clearer view of the problems and joys they must have shared as women in the same field.

Regardless of the source limitations that frustrate both author and reader, *Equal to the Occasion* is a solid achievement. Bennion has peeled history down a layer to those who may not have toppled governments or won great battles but who nevertheless had an impact on their time and place.

The book is a welcome addition to the personal library, and will be well received as supplemental reading for classes in history and women's studies. By paying attention to editors of local and special interest publications, Bennion reminds us that these kinds of periodicals have always been important in the lives of Americans, and that women have frequently been associated with this type of journalism.

Equal to the Occasion helps round out the picture of journalism history, adding dimension to a literature gradually being freed from domination by stories of the eastern establishment press and the men who ran it.

... *Barbara Cloud*
University of Nevada
Las Vegas

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CALLING HOME: WORKING-CLASS WOMEN'S WRITINGS: AN ANTHOLOGY.
By Janet Zandy.
• Rutgers University Press
• 1990, 340 pp.
• $39.95, Cloth; $12.95, Paper

WORDS ON FIRE: THE LIFE AND WRITING OF ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN.
By Rosalyn Fraad Baxandall.
• Rutgers University Press
• 1987, 320 pp.
• $38, Cloth; $15, Paper

AS JANET ZANDY points out in a strong introduction to her anthology *Calling Home: Working-Class Women's Writings*, although working-class women are the majority of women in the United States, their work and culture have rarely been visible. This collection aims to remedy this absence by presenting more than fifty selections that represent the ethnic, racial, and geographic diversity of working-class life, by such authors as Tillie Olsen, Marge Piercy, Vivian Gornick, Sandra Cisneros, and Mother Jones. Journalism historians will be especially interested in the pieces by such significant early twentieth-century journalists as Agnes Smedley and Meridel Le Sueur. In fact, Zandy calls Le Sueur (along with writer Tillie Olsen) the "spiritual and literary foremother of this anthology."

Included are Le Sueur's "Doàn Kêt" (meaning "solidarity" in Vietnamese), a poem from Le Sueur's *Ripening: Selected Work 1927–1980*, as well as her classic "Sequel to Love" (originally published in the *Anvil* in 1935), a moving account of an unwed mother's forced sterilization. Smedley is represented by "The Little Drama of the Lowly" (from *Daughter of Earth*, first published in 1929) and "The Fall of Shangpo" (from *Proletarian Literature in the United States*, published in 1935), an eyewitness account written in fall 1931.

Both Smedley and Le Sueur were part of a group of leftist advocacy women writers who wrote memorable pieces during the Depression era (and in Le Sueur's case, far beyond; she is still publishing critically acclaimed work at age ninety). This group included such journalists as Mary Heaton Vorse, Josephine Herbst, and Dorothy Day. As Susan Ware notes in *Holding Their Own: American Women in the 1930s* (Twayne, 1982), journalism was considered one of the few acceptable ways for women activists of this period to use their talents for the benefit of their causes.

Subsequent scholarship has explored this area somewhat. For instance, Charlotte Nekola and Paula Rabinowitz include a sampling of Depression-era women journalists' work and a short introductory essay on this subject in their collection *Writing Red: An Anthology of American Women Writers, 1930–1940* (Feminist Press, 1987).

Also, a few biographies have focused on individual women journalists of this period, such as Dee Garrison's excellent *Mary Heaton Vorse: The Life of an America Insurgent* (Temple University Press, 1989).

A significant addition to this literature is Rosalyn Fraad Baxandall's *Words on Fire: The Life and Writing of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn*. Part of the Douglass Series on women's lives and the meaning of gender, this study relates the life story of Flynn (1890–1964), the "Rebel Girl" considered to be one of the greatest orators of her day, who organized for the Industrial Workers of the World and led many of the Wobbly strikes (including the famous Lawrence, Paterson, and Passaic strikes). One of the founders of the American Civil Liberties Union, she fought numerous free speech battles and at the time of her death chaired the Communist Party of America.

Baxandall lucidly details Flynn's organizing for the IWW, her organization of the defense in the Sacco and Vanzetti case, her political influence, and her colorful, unconventional personal life. Baxandall's research is far-ranging and meticulous. It includes thorough examination of Flynn's papers at New York University and Wayne State University (which Baxandall was instrumental in having microfilmed and preserved, by the way) and examination of other collections (including FBI files), as well as many interviews with Flynn's relatives, friends, and colleagues.

The book includes a substantial selection of Flynn's writings, such as examples of her *Daily Worker* columns (which she wrote at the rate of two or three a week) and her letters and poetry. Subjects include Flynn's views on women's rights, strikes, and class struggles.

Baxandall's conclusion, "Pioneer or Aunt Tom?" thoughtfully analyzes Flynn's contributions as a revolutionary and model for women today. While Flynn's "leadership and speaking ability inspired and stretched the boundaries of what was possible for all women," she simultaneously served as "a token, providing the window dressing for male leadership.

"Because she was female," Baxandall continues, "the I.W.W. and the Communist party could parade Flynn as representative and void the accusation of being a male club. Although she periodically brought up the fact that she was the only female on the Party's national board, she did not organize other women for fundamental change, nor did she dare bring up the matter formally."

Ultimately, Baxandall concludes, "Without a feminist movement, and feminist consciousness, an exceptional woman is a token, a rebel and not a revolutionary." That was Flynn's position. Her life "shows both the possibilities and the inherent limitations of trying to make it in a man's world without the backup of a feminist movement that could stress accountability and collective strength."

... Nancy Roberts
University of Minnesota

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ISSUES IN FEMINIST FILM CRITICISM.
Edited by Patricia Erens.
• Indiana University Press
• 1990, 320 pp.
• $17.50, Paper

THIS EDITED VOLUME of feminist film criticism is essentially a follow up to Patricia Erens's earlier collection of essays *Sexual Stratagems: The World of Women and Film* (1979). While that earlier book reflected the state of feminist film studies in the 1970s, Erens's most recent collection is designed to guide the reader through the maelstrom of feminist film criticism that emerged in the 1980s.

The book is organized as a series of debates focusing on four key concerns: 1) "Critical Methodology: Women and Representation" 2) "Rereading Hollywood Films," 3) "Critical Methodology: Feminist Filmmaking," and 4) "Assessing Films Directed by Women." Accounting for her selection of essays, Erens notes that: "I have included as many approaches and methodologies as possible, because I believe that each has

something to add to our understanding of the complex issues relating to women and film and because I am suspicious of the orthodoxy of any one approach. . . . Each section includes articles that treat similar topics from opposing viewpoints."

This debate format is both the strength and the weakness of Erens's collection. She intends the book to "meet the needs of both beginning and advanced students and to stimulate discussion," but she falls into the trap of trying to satisfy the needs of too many potential users and failing to meet adequately those of any one group. The essays included in this book are far too complex for a beginning student of either feminist criticism or film studies. They draw heavily on European semiotics, Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis, and on deconstruction, all of which require a working knowledge of the specialist vocabulary for the genre. Erens does provide an excellent five- or six-page introduction to each primary section, in order to situate the essays that follow in their theoretical and historical contexts. But for a beginning student this is hardly enough.

On the other hand, while Erens must be complimented for compiling historical and contemporary works in feminist film criticism in one book, and for her timely review of the major works from the 1980s, nearly all the essays are either already regarded as classics by any serious student or scholar of feminist film studies (such as Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"), or have been published previously in journals such as *Screen*, *New German Critique*, and *Jump Cut*, which are standard reading for advanced students in the discipline. For these readers Erens's book has little to offer except the ease of access that comes from having diverse articles published together in one book. In terms of scholarship, however, it offers nothing new to these advanced students or scholars.

Despite my reservations, this collection of essays is a useful source book and an effective guide to the complex world of feminist film criticism. But do not try to use it as a text for your introductory course.

. . . Anna Banks
University of Idaho

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THE VOICE OF AMERICA: PROPAGANDA AND DEMOCRACY, 1941–1945.
By Holly Cowan Shulman.
• University of Wisconsin Press
•1991, 256 pp
• $37.50, Cloth; $12.95, Paper

IN FEBRUARY 1992 the Voice of America will observe its fiftieth anniversary. During the bleak early days of U.S. intervention in the war, the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information began broadcasting to Europe, calling itself "voices from America": "Today America has been at war for seventy-nine days. Daily at this time we shall speak to you about America and the war. The news may be good or the news may be bad. But we shall tell you the truth." Playwright Robert Sherwood, theatrical producer John Houseman, and other talented, intrepid idealists formed the nucleus of this new Voice of America.

Holly Cowan Shulman's history of the wartime Voice presents important new insights into its conception of propaganda, its early efforts to use propaganda to effect foreign policy, the decline of liberal values at the Voice, the struggle among competing "voices" (the State Department, the military, and the executive branch), and the impact of the lack of a clearly articulated postwar vision on VOA broadcasts. She also masterfully reconstructs the "French desk" of the early 1940s as a case study of how policy was created and implemented in actual broadcasts. Some of the most brilliant talent in French journalism and the arts worked at that desk, including the noted editor Pierre Lazareff, philosopher Jacques Maritain, and other well-known poets, novelists, critics, and intellectuals. It is good that their efforts on behalf of their compatriots are not forgotten.

Cowan's meticulous research mines heretofore unexamined materials. Drawing from original ra-

dio scripts, OWI records, manuscript collections of important principals, oral histories, BBC archival material, and personal interviews with many of VOA's original executives and broadcasters, and much more, she spent years in an exhaustive attempt to understand VOA history in the several contexts of foreign policy, domestic politics, and American culture.

Some of her many interesting topics include analysis of the masterful way the British steered the VOA toward British political goals; of the political alliances that tried to strangle the early Voice (between William Donovan of the OSS and Rep. John Taber, for example); of VOA's acknowledged shift from the "bullet" theory to the "two-step flow" in communication theory; of the firing of VOA leadership as a result of the "moronic little king" incident in 1943; of the refuge that VOA's new conservative leadership took in straight, factual journalism after 1943; and of much more.

Shulman writes, "All propaganda operates by taking cultural myths and symbols and reworking them in the service of nationally conceived aims." The VOA and American propaganda played on the theme of America as an "innocent giant," on a mission to "save war-torn Europe." Houseman and other idealistic, visionary entrepreneurs had carte blanche to articulate that myth during the heady, disorganized days of the early Voice. Using thirties agit-prop theatrical style, Houseman's experimental Voice, with little good news from the front, had to fill the vacuum with the propaganda of hope and belief in democratic ideals and a visionary postwar world of peace and justice. After 1943, with victory assured, the emphasis on American military power overshadowed the power of ideas.

Shulman has made a valuable contribution to the history of government broadcasting and to American cultural history as well. VOA has drawn heavy criticism for its recent political shifts. Shulman's book, which, incidentally, is only the third exclusively about the VOA, offers tools for understanding VOA's present problems in the light of its early development and the corporate myths that have formed during its half-century existence.

... Maureen J. Nemecek
Oklahoma State University

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NEW YORK BY GAS-LIGHT AND OTHER URBAN SKETCHES.
By George G. Foster. Edited and with an introduction by Stuart M. Blumin.
• University of California Press
• 1990, 251 pp.
• $24.95, Cloth; $10.95, Paper

IT WAS IN the first half of the nineteenth century that New York City suddenly sparked and greatly outdistanced in population such urban rivals as Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore. By 1850, with a population of half a million, New York City had become an urban center unparalleled in the nation. This was new, very new, for the city had had only sixty thousand residents in 1800.

Such an accumulation of so many people in one small place inspired a new set of habits, the most intriguing ones being those that could be seen only by gaslight. Here, out of the sunshine, journalist and essayist George Foster ventured to gather first-hand, sensationalist information about the saloons, dance halls, baudy houses, theaters, and special shows featuring unclad "model artists." From all indications, Foster's interest in such affairs was not strictly professional, for he seems to have been unusually at ease in such surroundings. A ready audience awaited the publication of Foster's realistic sketches, for his book, *New York by Gas-Light*, published in 1850, sold as many as two hundred thousand copies. A second similar book, *New York in Slices*, did almost as well, and some of its chapters are included in this new edition of *Gas-Light*. Before and after publication of *New York by Gas-Light* Foster had worked for or edited several publications, the most noteworthy being Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*.

Despite the success of his book-length works, Foster

did not earn his fortune or anything like it. A series of forgeries landed him in prison, where he languished despite longtime friend Rufus Griswold's efforts to raise money to free him. Following his release in 1855, Foster went to work for the *Philadelphia Morning Times* as a reporter. Less than a year later, at age forty-two, Foster died of "congestion" or "fever of the brain."

Foster's sketches of New York are worthwhile on at least two levels. They show how urban journalists began expanding the scope of their work, probing deeply into aspects of the city that heretofore had gone unreported. They also gave careful, detailed descriptions of places and practices that largely escape historical treatments.

One learns, for example, of the hangouts and antics of the newsboys, who earned good money by selling the *Tribune*, the *Sun*, and some thirteen other daily newspapers on the streets. "An hour at 'Butter-cake Dick's', near midnight, will tell us more about the newsboy than we could learn in a month elsewhere," Foster writes, describing an underground eating house near the *Tribune*. One of those "newsboys," Mark Maguire, has pyramided himself at the age of twenty-five into a fortune by surrounding himself with "hundreds of ragged little satellites" who share with him a piece of their profits. We also see through Foster's eyes Dickens's Place, where on Saturday night a company of thieves, sailors, loafers, prostitutes and rowdies—together with a few honest, hard-working people—gather for music, drinking, dancing, and occasional fisticuffs. At yet another dance-house the owners have set up a series of obstacles for raiding police officers that enable patrons to scurry to safety.

The editor, Stuart Blumin, professor of American history at Cornell University, has written an excellent introduction that places Foster's work in stimulating context.

... Darwin Payne
Southern Methodist Univ.

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HEALTH IN THE HEADLINES: THE STORIES BEHIND THE STORIES.
By Stephen Klaidman.
• Oxford University Press
• 1991, 264 pp.
• $21.95, Cloth

HOW WE DECIDE what is healthy, what is not, and when to be afraid—our perceptions of scientific issues that affect the public—is based substantially, of course, on media judgments about those issues. Stephen Klaidman's new book provides a compelling look at those judgments, particularly the forces that shape, or manipulate, them. He examines how the press reported recent historical events such as the near-meltdown at Three Mile Island and the start of the AIDS epidemic. He offers solid analysis for editors and writers and good advice for their audiences.

The book looks particularly closely at the government's war on smoking, waged extensively by both sides through news columns. One contributor to sometimes weak coverage of the issue, he contends, is the ingrained journalistic practice of "balance," in which stories critical of smoking, for example, always include the industry response. If one view is clearly prevalent and untainted by bias, he says, "it should be presented as such, not as the equivalent of a less authoritative view." In the smoking stories, he says, the balancing "had either become mindless, or it served as a mechanism to prevent [the loss] of cigarette advertising."

Klaidman, a long-time newsman with the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, now is a fellow at Georgetown's Kennedy Institute of Ethics. In examining seven major health stories, much of his focus is on the difficulty in helping scientists explain problems to the public in a way that would "promote an appropriate level of concern without either oversimplifying or exaggerating the existing science."

The case studies are fascinating, and especially valuable in helping him make points that are vital if coverage of health issues and the risk inherent in them is to improve. He is careful to note the problems in assessing risk, a process

ages-old but still in its infancy as a scientific discipline. People pick their risks, he observes, but often on information that is incomplete, confused, or just wrong.

As one of his sources wryly comments, the overall lifetime risk of dying is 100 percent—it is absolute. Short-term risk, however, is relative, not absolute. While it may appear safer, for example, to sleep late than to "spend the morning practicing free-fall parachuting, sleeping in does not eliminate the risks of radon, robbers or rapists," he notes. But comparing one risk with another is hard.

News stories help, but journalists' search for compelling, forceful stories can be misleading because the science involved is often filled with qualifications, uncertainties, and exceptions. A story qualified to satisfy scientists, Klaidman says, could be so soporific as to be ignored or misunderstood. Thus, journalists need to understand the concept of relative risk, and the ways in which the press functions can be and often are manipulated. "There is enough spin on health-risk stories," he says, to induce vertigo in all but the best-balanced reporters.

Examples surface in all his chapters—on a radon scare in New Jersey, the greenhouse effect, cholesterol, the pesticide EDB, nuclear power, and AIDS coverage. And through the cases he offers what he calls some basics: 1) assume there are no disinterested parties, 2) when a lot is at stake, expect a lost of manipulation, 3) expect the government to be a reluctant knight if the dragon is a rich source of tax revenue, and 4) expect the media to be similarly reluctant if the target is a rich source of ad revenue.

Klaidman's case studies are clear, interesting pieces of solid research. While he cites many cases of flawed coverage, he often finds the press performance good. His message to the media—in strong opening and closing chapters—is also clear, however: health-issue reporting is tough, it needs to be done better, and here is some recent history to point the way.

... Ted Stanton
University of Houston

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LIBERAL JOURNALISM AND AMERICAN EDUCATION, 1914–1941.
By James M. Wallace.
• Rutgers University Press
• 1991, 252 pp.
• $40, Cloth; $15, Paper

SOMEONE ONCE suggested that what Americans value, they centralize. So, for example, because we think national defense is important, we have a national army. Because we think education is not, we leave it to local authorities.

Now comes Lamar Alexander, secretary of education, who tells us the schools are failing and we need a "revolution" in thinking to fix them. The role of the federal government, which provides only about 7 percent of the funding for education, is to remain limited, however. What will work, he says, are voluntary national achievement tests and the efficiency of free market competition.

James Wallace shows us that wishful thinking about education has been going on for most of the century. He quotes James MacGregor Burns: "When political leaders fail, Americans often turn to the next most available saviors or scapegoats—the educators." Wallace sees Presidents Nixon, Reagan, and Bush as presiding over contemporary "social and economic disasters." If he is correct, it is not surprising that educators are the bogeymen of the continuing conservative countermarch.

But to get us from there to here, he takes us back to the years 1914 to 1941, when the future was being dreamed by progressive journalists. This is good history, and the reader who stays with this book will understand more clearly what Alexander and his "education president" are trying to accomplish and why they will fail.

The forum for much serious discussion of education was the journalism of the left, especially that which appeared in the pages of the *Nation* and *New Republic*. Wallace wisely understates causality and makes no unreasonable claims about the impact of the two journals.

But it is clear that they helped set the agenda for discussion, especially within the education establishment. In the long run, they legitimized progressive commentary within the professional journals themselves and helped educators understand the wider social context of what they were about. More importantly, says Wallace, the journals "provided a continual corrective to the naive assumption that education was *the* key to progress and reform," which awaited economic and social reform as a prior condition. At the same time they insisted that any meaningful reform had to include education.

Just what better schools would look like was not always clear. For example, from 1914 to 1921, the journals responded cautiously to the earlier call for business-oriented efficiency in the schools. One imagines a Chaplinesque "Modern Times" schoolroom, where education could be purged of individual zeal and dysfunctional enthusiasm. Once the efficiency cult had been vetoed, the journals assessed other ideas such as unionization of teachers, communism, worker education, the New Deal, and the youth revolts of the Depression.

The writers whose work appeared in the journals included John Dewey, Walter Lippmann, and others who filled "multiple roles as educators, journalists and activists." At one point Wallace refers to this as "opposition journalism," a useful term that begs the question of whether journalism as an instrument of reform can ever exist within an established system. He suggests that many reformers who once were true outsiders are now "in but not of" academe, the establishment radicals so familiar on most university campuses. Ultimately, he suggests, the schools are better off than they were seventy-five years ago because the opposition has moved closer to the sources of power. In other words, what the journalists could not accomplish as outsiders, they accomplished as insiders in the system they opposed.

Wallace succeeds brilliantly in recreating a vibrant era full of fantastic dreamers who insisted on being taken seriously. Today's reformers, by contrast, might look to the lost eloquence of a time when ideas were the currency of progressive reform.

... Paul Ashdown
University of Tennessee

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THE DRAGON'S PUPILS, A CHINA ODYSSEY.
By Kenneth Starck.
• Iowa State University Press
• 1991, 250 pp.
• $24.95, Cloth

THE JOURNALIST AS travelling reporter is as time-honored as foreign correspondence itself. The format for such reporting has always been more relaxed and, some would argue, more creative, reflective, and entertaining than the "beat" reporting that goes on daily at the average metropolitan newspaper.

There is the exotic flavor of the subject matter, the seemingly magical distance of sometimes internationally commanding events, and the persona of the reporter to lend interpretation and charm to the narrative. One thinks here of the foreign correspondence of Januarius McGahan and such turn-of-the-century *New York Journal* reporters as Stephen Crane, James Creelman, Willis Abbot, Charles Michelson, and Sylvester Henry Scovel.

In our own time, foreign correspondence would appear to have been largely co-opted by the electronic media: the woman or man actually standing on the last bomb-levelled site of the most recent war in the Middle East or wherever. But, while this form of reportage may be more convincing because of its immediacy, the written account has the intellectual advantage of a certain reflectiveness, however brief the time for that reflectiveness may have been. When the reporter spends months or years in a foreign country absorbing the language, the culture, and the landscape, and learning the minds and hearts of the people, what results might be called "cultural reportage."

This is what one finds in Kenneth Starck's new book, *The Dragon's Pupils, A China Odyssey*. Dartmouth College President James O. Freedman, who wrote the foreword to the book, defines such reportage as "a careful attempt to describe a foreign culture in its own terms." The author himself, in the book's epilogue, views cultural reportage as "struggling to see another culture by looking from the inside out rather than by looking from the outside in."

Starck, director of the University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication, has held to these definitions in doing the research for his new book. He and his wife, Raija, lived in China from the fall 1986 until early summer 1987, while Starck was Fulbright Professor at the Institute of Journalism of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, where he taught graduate students from throughout the country.

During his stay, Starck had not only the opportunity to immerse himself in the culture of Beijing but also time to travel through the region and learn, firsthand, broader Chinese cultural realities in their own terms—including the early stirrings of cultural and political winds of change that led to the Tiananmen Square repression in 1989.

From Beijing Starck's travels led him, among other places, to the Forbidden City; to Shanghai (to Fudan University); to a railroad steam-engine manufacturing plant in Datong; to the high mountains of Guilin, near the Vietnam border; to Qufu, hometown of Confucius; to Inner Mongolia, home of Genghis Khan; to the Potala Palace in Tibet; and, finally, out of China by rail on the Mongolian International Express, through what was at the time the Soviet Union.

Along the way the reader not only travels through representative landscapes and cultures, with the author as urbane and knowledgeable guide, but also takes with Starck a fascinating temporal tour: along the contours of an inevitable modernism clashing with a huge and inscrutable timelessness, so historically characteristic of China.

Along the way the reader also witnesses today's Chinese students struggling with issues involving a free press as defined by capitalist countries, as well as sometimes struggling with the press as defined by the communist government of China: "In the U.S. there is the false freedom of the press, but in our country we have the genuine freedom of no freedom of the press" (65, originally quoted in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*).

Here Starck picks his way well, refusing to make judgments that would be tantamount to cultural prejudices, while nonetheless pointing up ideological realities that impinge on his twenty-four Chinese graduate students.

The book's 250 pages (counting an epilogue, references, and index) hold the reader to the Chinese culture and landscape, and contain not a single dull moment. Pictorial illustrations are frequent and relevant, and the writing style is graceful and scenic. Here is but one brief example, a description of Tiananmen Square on the anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China: "Days before the observance, the flowers had begun popping up all over the city, especially in Tiananmen Square. From wire and chrysanthemums a giant dragon sprang forth. Two oval water fountains appeared one day. Peacocks made of flowers settled in. Huge flower beds erupted into a riot of colors overnight. According to reports, one hundred thousand pots of flowers were brought to Tiananmen Square for the celebration" (30).

Tiananmen indeed becomes something of a central symbolic backdrop for the author's narrative, the brooding epilogue to which recounts briefly the square's flashes of violence during the governmental crackdown in the summer of 1989—a deflowering, of sorts, of the spirit of Western freedom and political change.

The "bourgeois professor," as the author is at one point tagged, emerges by the book's close as something of a marginal man: one foot firmly grounded in the journalistic traditions of his own country; the other lifting,

finally, to leave a land he has come to love but one that is at odds with itself—and at odds, especially, with its young people.

Starck's book is a highly readable, first-rate education in Chinese life and culture just before a special historic moment. It is rendered from the particular eye of a sensitive reporter and gifted writer—one who obviously cares a great deal about the Chinese people and culture. Highly recommended.

. . . Gary L. Whitby
East Texas State University

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BRET HARTE'S CALIFORNIA: LETTERS TO THE *SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN* AND *CHRISTIAN REGISTER*, 1866–67.
By Gary Scharnhorst.
• University of New Mexico Press
• 1990, 170 pp.
• $22.50, Cloth

THIS SLIM VOLUME contains thirty-seven "letters" that Bret Harte wrote from 1866 to 1867 for two Massachusetts newspapers, the *Springfield Republican* and the *Christian Register*, a weekly of the Unitarian Church in Boston. Harte was still a literary unknown when he wrote these letters, most of which are being reprinted for the first time since original publication. They appeared before he became editor of the *Overland Monthly* and before he achieved fame as the author of "The Luck of Roaring Camp," "The Idyl of Red Gulch," and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat." But in many ways, the letters in *Bret Harte's California* seem to contain more actuality than his sentimental fiction.

Although the book's editor calls the letters "essays," that label is a misnomer. The letters, of course, are not factual records, or simply reports, but a type of dispatch common to the nineteenth-century newspaper. Such correspondence generally included subjective reports of events and activities in a specific locale, mixed with some selective local history, description, and commentary. Although such letters often dealt with travel outside the U.S. (Twain's letters to the *Alta California* that later became *The Innocents Abroad* are probably the best known), eastern newspapers regularly printed such letters from western correspondents and travelers, who usually depicted the West as rough and raw, and occasionally as strange and exotic.

Harte's letters clearly fit the category. For instance, a letter written on 5 April 1866, and published in the *Republican* in May, refers to a few newsworthy items in a personal voice typical of such correspondence or dispatches.

Most of the letter deals with an earthquake. Harte tells his readers it was not as strong as an October earthquake, and then he describes what happens when an earthquake occurs. There is, he writes, "the awful suspense" and "the ominous rumble and rattle; the shock . . . of rolling, bumping, swaying and jolting, and the succeeding hush, broken at last by anxious voices, shuffling feet, barking of dogs, neighing of horses and crowing of cocks."

He also notes that earthquakes are great social equalizers, when "mistress and maid faint in each other's arms," and "'Washoe' in his gilded palace and Pat in his shanty forsake their respective habitations to find safety in the democratic thoroughfare."

Harte argues in the letter that earthquakes are generally not that bad for California, that those who are the most alarmed are "the very parvenus of a parvenu civilization." The real threat to California's stability and prosperity is not a physical disturbance, but "Ruffianism, brigandage, chivalry, gambling, scandalous legislation, lynch law. . . . The pistol and knife, drunkenness and debauchery have claimed more victims."

The letter also deals with legislative corruption, and ends with an elaborate discussion of the hot California sun, complete with classical references. (Rare is the Harte letter in this volume without several sentences on the weather and its effect on the population.)

Harte's tone throughout most of the letters is that of the informed observer, someone who is proudly a part of this emerging civili-

zation called California, yet someone who has the sensibility and knowledge of an Eastern gentleman. This allows Harte to be a California booster and believer in one paragraph, and a cynic and critic in the next. When he criticizes he employs wit, irony, and humor and becomes a more genteel, and literary, critic.

At one point, however, Harte claims to have found paradise: "The Utopia of this coast—the place where the wind doesn't blow and fogs come not—has at last been found! This enchanted spot, this Xanadu of the San Francisco poetical dream, is situated about four miles from Oakland, on the opposite side of the bay and is called 'Berkeley.'"

That passage is a reminder that these letters are a small part of the great amount of writing for the Eastern press that helped define the West and California, and perhaps romanticize it, for generations to come. They are part of a body of writing that contributed to the creation of both Western reality and a mythology. As part of that process, and as part of a distinct journalistic narrative form, Harte's letters may be of some value to journalism historians.

... Thomas B. Connery
University of St. Thomas

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WHAT NEWS? THE MARKET, POLITICS AND THE LOCAL PRESS.
By Bob Franklin and David Murphy.
• Routledge
• 1991, 240 pp.
• $74.50, Cloth; $19.95, Paper

BOB FRANKLIN, a lecturer in the Department of Politics at the University of Keele, and David Murphy, a lecturer in the School of Management at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, provide an expertly researched, well-written, and thoroughly interesting study of recent developments and future prospects of the local press in Britain.

The basic questions they raise—"Why do free local papers contain so little news?" "Just how 'Alternative' is the alternative local press?"—are more than adequately answered. Their conclusions and speculations about the future of the local press provide disturbing insights that have parallels and lessons for research dealing with the American local press.

The following quote from their chapter on the future of the local press seems to sum up the situation: "[W]hile the traditional local press has declined, the variety which promised to engulf it has proved illusory. A new sort of commercial local press has developed: owned by conglomerates, driven by the need for advertising, employing fewer journalists who are low-paid and producing news which is geared to low-cost production in the interest of sustaining more advertising." As an avid observer of trends in the American local press, this reviewer cannot avoid seeing parallels, as well as some dissimilarities, between American papers and their British counterparts.

Most disturbing, is that Franklin and Murphy see no "visible countervailing tendency which would suggest a reinvigoration of the local press as a means of scrutinizing or informing a system of local politics which has been stifled and undermined." While lamenting this sad state of affairs "since vibrant and autonomous local government in tandem with an independent and well-resourced local press are important ingredients of a democratic polity," the authors at least offer some suggestions for turning the situation around. Unfortunately, these ideas for doing this are sketchy, largely undeveloped and only a starting place for further discussion. Their suggestions for revitalizing the local press—by somehow restricting monopoly ownership, guaranteeing rights and working conditions for journalists, and establishing a critical watchdog press council funded by sources other than the Newspaper Society, with a well-defined mission to monitor the quality and journalistic integrity of the local press—are presented nebulously

and without any suggestions of how these things might be done, or whether anyone might be seriously trying to accomplish such reform.

A follow-up companion to Franklin and Murphy's excellent research into the existing situation would be an in-depth exploration into just what could be done to correct the serious deficiencies afflicting the press, and reversing the gloomy prospects foreseen. In any case, the authors provide excellent statistical information, lucid analysis, and some fascinating and readable case studies that make this book a must read for any serious student of the press in a democratic society. Although the issues, circumstances, and situations have a British setting, any study of the American local press scene will likely find parallels, and maybe suggestions for reform.

... Schyler Rehart
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Fresno

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WAR PHOTOGRAPHY: REALISM IN THE BRITISH PRESS.
By John Taylor.
• Routledge
• 1991, 199 pp.
• $18.95, Paper

ONE CANNOT HELP but reflect on the one-sided coverage of the 1991 Gulf War in America media while reading this scholarly study of how photojournalism is used in wartime. John Taylor, formerly a photography magazine editor and currently a senior lecturer in the history of art and design at the Polytechnic in Woverhampton, England, uses examples from the two world wars, the Falklands campaign, and the ongoing terrorism in the United Kingdom to make his points. Unfortunately, the publisher or author has not given most of the valuable examples from newspaper and journal pages the space they truly deserve.

Taylor argues on the opening page that regardless of the quality of the images, photographs "are widely accepted as standing for the real thing. They are taken as objective records, different from experience but none the less anchored in the real world. ... The press industry also uses photographic realism as a simple equivalent to reality. We shall examine what is actively produced from this belief and usage."

Using a sociological approach familiar to those who know Allan Sekula's essay "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning," Taylor examines the conventions used by photojournalists and editors, including how "newsworthiness" gives journalists license to do the unthinkable. A good example of Taylor's style of criticism can be seen in the following passage: "Photographs of the dead carry both the cool authority of record and, weighted by the caption and storyline, the meat of 'news.' Death becomes a commodity to stir the blood of the living, who for a few pence can contemplate the proof of others' mortality. Those who act upon the fantasies otherwise fed by the press and television, who choose to visit the scenes of death, and even steal from them, are considered to have transgressed and are castigated as ghouls. In contrast, it is legitimate for photographers and reporters to pick over the remains; and we as viewers, if we are so minded, can surreptitiously take vicarious pleasure in the horror of it all. This is not a pure horror: it is distant from experience; it is death constructed on the picture editor's desk. The photographs derive from existing practice, often according to unwritten rules of self-censorship in journalism."

Extensive notes, bibliography, and detailed index help make this book a welcome addition to the ongoing analysis of photojournalism's history and its crucial role within the news media. However, these densely packed pages really have as much to do with the sociology and history of the British press in general.

... C. Zoe Smith
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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
ATHENS, GA. 30602-3018

REF
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VOL 9
NO 3-4

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MAY 06 1998

AMERICAN JOURNALISM

Published by the American Journalism Historians Association

SUMMER-FALL 1992 Volume IX / Numbers 3 & 4

AMERICAN JOURNALISM

American Journalism (ISSN 0882-1127) is the official quarterly publication of the American Journalism Historians Association.

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We apologize for the long delay in publication of this issue of *American Journalism*. Special thanks for getting it into print go to Carol Sue Humphrey, chair of the Publications Committee of the American Journalism Historians Association, who identified and collected all the articles and reviews that earlier had been accepted for publication; David Sloan, who coordinated production; and Wally Eberhard, who coordinated printing and mailing of the issue.

EDITORIAL PURPOSE. *American Journalism* publishes articles and reviews dealing with all aspects of the history of mass communication.

SUBMISSIONS. Authors of all research manuscripts should send four copies to Prof. Shirley Biagi, Editor, *American Journalism*, Department of Journalism, California State University, Sacramento, CA 95819. The maximum length for a manuscript is 30 pages, including all notes and tables. All manuscripts are blind refereed. They will be returned to the author only if the author has included a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS. Subscriptions may be ordered through the *American Journalism* editorial offices at the Department of Journalism, California State University, Sacramento, CA 95819.

AMERICAN JOURNALISM

Summer and Fall 1992

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Hojas Volantes: The Beginning of Print Journalism in the Americas

Victoria Goff*

Hojas volantes, or "flying sheets," are the earliest examples of print journalism in the Americas. These news sheets appeared irregularly and usually covered only one news event. The oldest extant *hoja*, which was published in 1542, is a report of an earthquake and storm that devastated Guatemala City in 1541.[1] Its headline (*Relación del espantable terremoto que ahora nuevamente ha acontecido en las Indias en una ciudad llamada Guatemala*)[2] is long for current tastes, but its reporting is relatively modern and thorough. Its lead ("On Saturday, September 10, 1541, at 2 in the night...") goes on to report the destruction of life and property. In great detail the report lists the victims, their occupations, and their families, and recounts, when possible, how they died.

While mostly factual, the eight-page *hoja volante* reported more than facts. Religion was an important part of sixteenth century life. Therefore, it is not surprising that the *hoja* editorialized as follows: "We have attributed it to our sins because we do not know how nor from where came such a great tempest."[3] The *hoja* went on to report that "in order to placate the wrath of God, the Bishop held a procession the next morning, and said many masses at the main altar with much devotion and encouraged them and gave them strength. He told them that God had taken the good people to glory and that those remaining were left for testing and that we should fear death at all times."[4]

This calamity is long forgotten, but Mexico and Guatemala still argue over who should get credit for this particular *hoja*, which, if not the first precursor of newspapers in the New World, is certainly the oldest surviving one. Both countries have a good claim. The *hoja* was printed by Mexico City printer Juan Pablos, but the earthquake occurred on Guatemalan soil and was reported by Juan Rodriguez, an *escribano* (notary public) living in Guatemala.[5]

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[1]*Relación del espantable terremoto que ahora nuevamente ha acontecido en la Indias en una ciudad llamada Guatemala* (Mexico: Juan Pablos, 1541). The original copy is held in the Hemeroteca Nacional de México.

[2]Actually this is not the complete headline. There is a subhead that reads as follows: *"Es cosa de grande admiración y de grande ejemplo para que todos no enmendemos de nuestros pecados y estemos apercibidos para cuando Dios fuere servido de nos llamar."*

[3]*Relación del espantable terremoto...*, 7.

[4]Ibid.

[5]See Mary Gardner's *The Press of Guatemala* (Lexington, Kentucky: Association for Education in Journalism, 1971) for the Guatemalan side of the argument.

It must, however, be remembered that this is a twentieth century debate. In 1541, only twenty years after Cortes's conquest of the Aztec empire, there was little or no distinction between Mexicans and Guatemalans; there were only Spaniards. Therefore, most authorities credit Mexico City, the viceregal capitol of Nueva España (New Spain), as the birthplace of journalism in the Western Hemisphere, especially since the vast majority of Spanish American *hojas volantes* in the colonial period were printed and published in Mexico City.

American journalism historians, with a few exceptions, have neglected the contributions of Spanish America in the founding of journalism in the New World. This article, based primarily on the excellent collection of seventeenth-century *hojas volantes* held by the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection at The University of Texas at Austin, will attempt to rectify this situation and will analyze the audience, format, content, sources, and style of these forerunners of modern journalism. Only *hojas volantes* that were printed in Nueva España were studied.

But before examining the *hojas* in greater detail, a word or two should be said about printing. After Johann Gutenberg used movable type to print his Bible in Germany in 1456, printing presses spread throughout Europe. Before the end of the fifteenth century, there were print shops in all the countries that would eventually colonize the New World. European kings were quick to recognize the religious and political ramifications of the printing press; and licensing, prior restraint, and seditious libel soon became universal. Publishing under authority from the government, plus ecclesiastical censorship, retarded the development of journalism in Spanish America for centuries.

Despite possible royal apprehension, Nueva España's first bishop, Juan de Zumárraga, convinced Emperor Carlos V in 1533 of the need for a library, a paper mill, and a printing press.[6] Zumárraga also asked the Emperor in a 1533 memorial to grant aid to people interested in going to Nueva España "to enable them to implant this art (printing)."[7] This memorial, which is in the Archives of the Indies in Seville, has notes in the margin directing officials to grant transportation expenses and privileges to New Spain's first printer.[8]

Experts disagree about the exact date the printing press was introduced to Mexico. A letter from Bishop Zumárraga to the Emperor, dated May 6, 1538, confirms that there was a printer and a printing press in Mexico at least by that time.[9] Most Mexican authorities agree that the printing press was brought to Mexico in 1536, more than one hundred years before printing was introduced to the English colonies.[10] There is also general agreement that the first printer was

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[6]In a 1533 memorial addressed to the King, Zumárraga wrote: "Because the greatest need experienced by the Church and all the land is that of a good library to solve the doubts and questions that arise daily, I beg Your Highness and Lords to order and command what portion of the tithes shall be used for the purchase (of books) and expenses thereof." Juan de Zumárraga, *Memorial*, (undated), cited in José Toribio Medina, *La imprenta en México*, 8 vols. (Santiago de Chile: 1910-11), I: xxv.

[7]Zumárraga *Memorial* (undated), cited by Medina, *La imprenta en México*, I: xxxvi.

[8]Carlos Castañeda, "The Beginning of Printing in America," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 20 (1940), 671-685.

[9]Letter of Zumárraga to Charles V, May 6, 1538, cited by Joaquín García Icazbalceta, "Tipografía mexicana," *Obras*, XVIII *Biblioteca de autores mexicanos-historiadores* (Mexico: Imprenta de V. Agüeros, 1898), x.

[10]There is disagreement among U.S. authorities about the date. Estimates range from 1535 to 1539, but most Mexican authorities agree on 1536.

Esteban Martín, who, along with later printers, produced primarily religious texts and tracts in both Latin and Spanish. As part of the Church's proselytizing efforts, bilingual books in Spanish and native tongues such as Náhuatl and Tarascan were also printed. Although there are no extant copies, most authorities believe the earliest books were the *Escala espiritual para llegar al cielo, traduccion del latín al castellano por el ven. padre Juan de Estrada*, which was reputedly printed in Mexico in 1535, and a *Catecismo Méxicano*, which was printed two years later.[11]

Although religious titles predominated, a variety of other topics were covered. Early nineteenth-century American printer and press scholar Isaiah Thomas wrote that since the press was "under the absolute control of government, we might expect to find the catalogue of Spanish American publications confined within narrow limits; but the fact is, that the works which treat of religion, history, morals, and classical works, which in that country have been printed, are numerous."[12] Agustín Agüeros de la Portilla, a Mexican expert on Spanish-American printing, mentioned other books that dealt with medicine, law, and the military and naval arts.[13]

By the end of the sixteenth century, almost 250 separate titles had been published in Mexico.[14] Nonetheless, the government maintained strict control over printing throughout the colonial period. Imprints had to be approved by censors in Spain before they could be published, which usually resulted in an expensive, lengthy process.[15]

Although book printing dominated most of the colonial period, the presses were also used in the founding of Spanish-American journalism. However, the development of Mexican periodicals was relatively slow. The first regularly published periodical, *Gaceta de Mexico,* was not started until 1722. Although there were no newspapers in Mexico from 1519 to 1722, *hojas volantes* were frequently produced and sold by printers in Mexico City by the middle of the sixteenth century. They really came into their own in the seventeenth century. *Hojas* were often referred to as *relaciones* or reports, and these terms will be used interchangeably in this article. These American news sheets were patterned after Spanish *relaciones*, which were first printed in the early sixteenth century. Reporting important events in Spain, the Spanish models included the "exact dates and times, details and protocol of the period, and insights into the tastes and styles of the century," according Henry F. Schulte, an expert on the Spanish press.[16]

The *relaciones* also shared some similarities with *corantos,* news sheets which were first published in Holland around 1620. The *corantos* were created to provide merchants with foreign and commercial news. *Corantos* spread to England

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[11]Castañeda, "The Beginning of Printing in America," 674.

[12]Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America* (1810; reprint ed, Albany: Joel Munsell, 1874), 7.

[13]Agustín Agüeros de la Portilla, *Documentos para la historia de la primitiva tipografía mexicana* (Sevilla: 1908), 371.

[14]Carlos Alvear Acevedo, *Breve historia del periodismo* (Mexico: Editorial Jus, 1965), 75.

[15]Vicente G. Quesada. *La vida intélectual, en la América española durante los siglos XVI, XVII, y XVIII* (Buenos Aires: La Cultural Argentina), 16.

[16] Henry F. Schulte, *The Spanish Press 1470-1966: Print, Power and Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968), 72.

in 1621 where the people were hungry for news about the Thirty Years War, but they were eventually replaced after about twenty years by diurnals, daily reports of domestic and local events involving the king and parliament. Spanish American *hojas,* unlike the *corantos,* did not carry commercial news, but, like their European counterparts, they reported foreign affairs extensively. Their lifespan was also longer. The *hojas,* which predated the *corantos,* remained popular into the eighteenth century.

The Joaquín García Icazbalceta Manuscript Collection

Most of this article is based on seventeenth-century *hojas, relaciones,* and *gazetas* from the Joaquín García Icazbalceta Manuscript Collection at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection at The University of Texas at Austin. This impressive collection has perhaps the rarest examples of this genre outside Latin America.[17] To get a better understanding of these newspaper prototypes, there will be frequent reference to this collection, which consists of two volumes of 208 examples dating from 1610 to 1703. Theses news sheets can tell us a lot about the men and women who produced them, what they considered newsworthy, how they gathered their information, how they formatted, copy edited, and designed their product, and how the *hojas* gradually developed the characteristics of the newspaper over time.

What Was Considered Newsworthy?

Perhaps it is a good idea to discuss what an *hoja* or *relación* was not. It was not, for example, "news" in the sense of being topical. The sea voyage from Europe usually took many months. By the time Mexican printers reprinted the news from Europe, it was definitely dated. Even local stories, because of poor internal transportation and communication, were not timely.

Most of the *hojas* reported European news. Little was written about local events and personalities in comparison. There are several possible reasons for this. Most of the early colonists planned to make their fortune in New Spain and retire to Spain; therefore, they wanted to keep up on events at home. Even the ones who decided to stay were homesick for news of Spain. Henry Lepidus, in his pioneering study of journalism in Mexico, argued that life was so calm and serene in New Spain that there wasn't enough local news to print.[18] It is more likely that licensing and censorship made it wiser to report foreign news that had already been authorized.

Consequently, colonial *relaciones* featured safe subjects — births, deaths, and marriages in the royal houses of Europe. For obvious reasons, most of these *hojas* covered the Spanish royal family. For example, the birth and baptism of Princess Margarita Maria; the illness, death, and burial of Felipe IV; the last wills and testaments of Felipe III and Carlos II; and the wedding of Maria Teresa, the infanta of Spain, to Louis XIV were chronicled in the *hojas.*[19]

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[17]*Joaquín García Icazbalceta Collection*, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection at The University of Texas at Austin.

[18]See Henry Lepidus, *The History of Mexican Journalism* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri, 1928).

[19]*Verdadera relación del nacimiento y baptismo de la serenissima infanta d. Margarita Maria de Austria,*

The political machinations of kings, including their wars, were also of interest to colonial readers. During the seventeenth century, most of Europe was at war, and New World readers were anxious to learn about European battles and wars as well as pirate attacks and naval confrontations with the Dutch or English in their part of the world. Of special interest were the war with Turkey, the Portuguese rebellion, and Spain's status in the Netherlands. Spanish Americans also wanted to be apprised of the activities of the French and English.[20] During those rare moments when Europe was at peace, the peace treaties were published. A treaty between Spain and England was reported in 1668 as was another one between Spain and France in 1679.[21]

Although the conquest of Mexico began in 1519, the occupation of the rest of the Americas continued well into the seventeenth century, and colonial readers in Mexico City wanted to keep abreast of Spain's expansion. In fact, the first *hoja* in the García Icazbalceta collection, dated 1610, deals with the conquest of Indians in the province of Nueva Vizcaya.[22]

Royal appointments *(provisiones y mercedes)* were also newsworthy. In addition to appointing political officials such as viceroys, captains-general, and members of the *audiencia,* Hapsburg and Bourbon monarchs made ecclesiastical appointments. *Hojas* began listing both types of appointments after 1650 and continued to list them for both Nueva España and Perú almost every year and occasionally listed appointments in Spain and the Pacific.[23]

With the close interaction between state and church, *relaciones* also carried religious news. These stories ran the gamut from the death of a Pope to miracles.

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hija de los reyes nuestros señores don Felipe quarto, y D. María-Ana de Austria (Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, circa 1651); *Viaje del rey nuestro señor, a S. Juan de Luz, y desposorio de la sereníssima señora infanta de España, con Luis XIV, rey christianíssimo de Francia. Y buelta de su magestad a esta corte* (Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1661); *Clausulas y mandas notables del testamento que antes de su muerte hizo el muy católico y religiosissimo rey don Felipe Tercero nuestro Señor q goza de Dios, con los christianíssimos actos, y pláticas espirituales, que tuvo con su confessor y con el padre Geronymo de Florencia de la Cõpañía de Jesús, confessor de los Señores Infantes en su transito. Y cosas muy notables que su magestad hizo y dispuso personalmente en este dicho tiempo* (Mexico: Diego Garrido, 1621); *Relación de la enfermidad, muerte y entierro del Rey D. Felipe Quarto nuestro señor (que este en el cielo) sucedida jueves 17 de Septiembre año de 1665* (Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1666); *Copia del testamento cerrado que en dos de Octubre, de mil y setecientos del codicilio, que en cinco de dicho mes y año hizo la magestad cathólica del Señor Rey D. Carlos Segundo (que está en Gloria) Debaxo de cuya disposición falleció en primero de Noviembre siguiente. Y también copia del papel que cita el testamento* (No publisher, no date).

[20]*Vitoria, que las galeras de España han tenido, siendo general de ellos el excellentíssimo señor duque de Alburquerque* (Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1651); *Vitoria grandiosa, que don Antonio de Oquendo tubo en la canal de Inglaterrra contra quarenta navios oladeses entre los Bancos y Calès de Francia, a nueve días del mes de Septiembre de 1639 años* (Mexico: Pedro Quiñones, 1640); *Relación del reencuentro de la armada de galeones de flota, General D. Carlos de Ibarra, con la armada de Holanda, cerca de la Habana* (Mexico: Francisco Salbago, 1638).

[21]*Tratado para la continuación y renovación de Paz y Amistad, entre las coronas de España, y la Gran Bretaña* (Madrid: Domingo Garcia Morras, 1668; Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, circa 1668); *Tratado de la Paz ajustado entre las coronas de España y Francia. Año 1679* (Madrid; Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1679).

[22]*Relación de la entrada que hizo el governor de la Nueva Vizcaya Francisco de la Urdiñola a la conquista castigo y pacificaçión de los yndios llamados Xiximes por el año mill y seis cientos y diez, y acavo a fin del dicho año* (No publisher, circa 1610).

[23]*Mercedes y provisiones que su magestad (Dios le guarde) ha dado este año de 1652* (No publisher, circa 1652); *Provisiones, mercedes, y cargos que ha dado su Magestad (Dios le guarde) para Nueva España, Perú, y otras partes* (Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1650).

Church leaders were sometimes profiled, and religious festivals were described in detail. One *hoja,* for example, chronicled the founding of a Carmelite convent in Mexico City.[24] Another reported the state of Christianity in China. Because of the Counter-Reformation, stories of Protestants who converted to Catholicism were of great interest to readers. When the Queen of Sweden, Christina Adolfo, renounced her faith and crown and moved to a convent in Spain, it made good colonial copy.[25] Ordinary news events were often given a religious slant. For instance, *hojas* covering the war with the Turks frequently editorialized that the Church would ultimately triumph.[26] Even the report of a comet sighting in Constantinople in 1670 was viewed as an omen of a Christian victory against the Turks.[27]

Since there was not always a clear distinction between fact and fancy, it is not surprising that *relaciones* about miracles (visions, cures, etc.) were popular. For example, a 1640 *hoja* reported that Santo Domingo (St. Dominic) cured a deaf and mute child. Published by Juan Ruiz, the complete title reads "Brief Relation of the Miraculous and Celestial Image of Saint Dominic, Patriarch of the Order of Preachers, Brought from Heaven by the hand of the Virgin Our Lady. To the Convent that the said Order of Preachers Has in the Villa of Soriano, in the Kingdom of Naples. And Some of the Events in Mexico."[28] Another news sheet related the inexplicable ringing of church bells in a small town in Spain.[29] A series of *relaciones* dealt with miracles attributed to a nun from Valladolid.[30] Even a military victory against the French was attributed to a miracle in a 1676 *relación.*[31]

Several stories, while not dealing with miracles, were sensationalistic in na-

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[24]*Año de 1616: Lunes 20 de febrero, para la fundación que estava publicado para el dia siguiente, del nuevo convento de Carmelitas descalzas en esta ciudad de México* (No publisher, circa 1616).

[25]*Relación historial, en que se declaran los motivos que tuvo Christina Adolfo reyna de Suecia, Gocia y Vandalia, para dexar sus reynos y senorlos y retirarse a Bruxelas corte de Flandes y despues a Inspruch, a hazer la abjuración de la beregla, y professión de la Fé, en secreto y en publico: Y ultirnamente seguir su viage para Roma a besar el pie a su Santidad, y de alli passar a España, a vivir y morir religiosamente en el convento de las Descalcas de la villa de Madrid* (Sevilla: 1656; Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, circa 1656).

[26]*Relación primera de la Tartana, que vino de segundo aviso en 11 de Septiembre de 1685* (Mexico: Herederos de la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, circa 1685).

[27]*Relación, y copia de carta escrita de la ciudad de Constantinopla, a un cavallero de este ciudad de Sevilla, en que la da noticia de mas horrendo cometa que hasta aora se ha visto: Y de las ruynas que arnenaça al imperio Octomano* (No publisher, circa 1671).

[28]*Breve relación de la milagrosa, y celestial imagen de Santo Domingo Patriarca de la Orden de Predicadores, trayda de cielo por rn~o de la Virgen nuestra señora al convento que la dicha orden predicadores tiene en la villa de Soriana, en el reyno de Nápoles y algunos de los sucedidos en México* (Mexico: Iuan Ruyz, 1640); *Relación del protentoso milagro que Dios N. Señor ha obrado, por intercessión de la Virgen santíssima de Rosario, y del glorioso patriarca Santo Domingo, con un niño fordo, y mudo, vezino de la ciudad de Ginebra* (Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1656).

[29]*Relación y copia de carta escrita a un ministro desta corte, un vezino de la ciudad de Zaragoça, en este año de 1652. Sobre eltanimento de la campaña de Vililla* (Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1652).

[30]*Segunda parte de la relación de la monja de alseres, y dizense en ella cosas admirables, y side dignas de los valerosos hechos desta muger; de lo bien que empleò al tiempo en servicio de nuestro rey y señor* (Mexico: Hipólito de Rivera, circa 1653); *Ultima y tercera relación, en que se haze verdadera del resto de la vida de la monja alserez, sus memorables virtudes, y exemplar, muerte en estos reynos de la Nueva España* (Mexico: Hipólito de Rivera, 1653).

[31]*Gazeta del primer aviso de febrero de 1676. Trata de los sucesos adversos del exército de Francia en el imperio y de las victorias del Exército imperial* (No publisher, no date).

ture and were not unlike stories covered in today's supermarket tabloids. For example, one *relación* reported the discovery of a hideous monster in La Rochelle, France. Copper tablets that were found under rocks near the animal conveniently explained the beast. This 1649 *hoja,* which was published by the prominent printing family of Calderón, was the "true relation of the capture of a monster in France, with a human face with a long beard, the beak of an eagle, the body of a dragon, legs of an eagle, and the hands of a man."[32] According to the account in the *hoja,* the fantastic animal predicted universal happiness, abundant crops, worldwide peace, and no more hurricanes or tempests.[33] Another *hoja,* printed in Mexico City, reported the birth of Siamese twins in Lima and debated how the "monster" should be baptized.[34]

Unlike many modern Mexican newspapers, crime stories were reported infrequently. One of the few examples is held by the *Hemeroteca Nacional de México* and contains an account of the confession of Gabriel de la Cruz, who was hanged on February 19, 1680.[35] An earlier news sheet that was published by the Calderón family in 1651 contained the confession of Gabriel Marin who admitted he had used skeleton keys and picklocks to commit sixty-eight robberies. In the *relación,* he apologized for making his victims suspect that the thieves had been their friends, neighbors, servants, and slaves.[36]

While there were not many crime stories, natural disasters, such as the 1541 earthquake, continued to attract a colonial readership. The flooding of the Tormes River in Salamanca, Spain, was reported in 1626. *Relaciones* covering earthquakes in Lima, Cuzco, Seville, and Sicily are included in the García Icazbalceta Collection.[37]

Hojas that dealt with the who, what, why, when, and where of an event that took place on American soil were rare in comparison with news sheets that reported European events. However, there are examples in the collection of European news stories being localized. For instance, when a king died, local ceremonies were sometimes in the story.

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[32]*Relación verdadera en que se da cuenta de la presa que se ha hecho de un animal monstruoso en el Soso del lugar de Loyes, junto a la villa de La Rochela en Francia. Y el maravilloso descubrimiento de unas centurias que se han hallada escritas en una plancha de cobre, debaxo de una piedra, que los vientos recios de este año de 1648, arrancaron de la torre de Garot de la dicha Rochela todo a un tiempo: que pronostican el descubrimiento deste animal* (Madrid: Alonso de Paredes, 1648; Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1649).

[33]Ibid.

[34]*Relación verdadera de una criatura, que nació en la ciudad de Lima a 30 del mes de noviembre de 1694 martes à las ocho de la mañana, día de San Andrés Apóstol* (Lima: 1694; Mexico: Herederos de la Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1695).

[35]*Declaración que Gabriel de la Cruz mestizo, condenado por los señores alcaldes de esta Real Audiencia, à ahorcar por las caussas que contra el se hizieron de ladrón, hizo, el día diez y nueva de Febrero, de este año de 1680, en la Capilla de la Real Carcel, antes de salir de ella; que pidiò se leyese despueés de muerto y los señores mandaron se leyese debaxo de la horca* (Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, *circa* 1680).

[36]*Declaracion que dio en la horca Gabriel Marin, al Licenciado Francisco Corchero Carreno, Presbytero, su Confessor: A quien pidio por amor de Dios la publicase, en ella despues de su muerte, para descargo de su conciencia* (Mexico Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1651).

[37]*Sucesso de la grande y furiosa avenida del Río Tormes: Daños y ruynas que causó en la ciudad de Salamanca, y sus arrabales* (Mexico: Viuda de Diego Garrido, 1626); *Verdadera relación del gran temblor, y terremoto que Dios N. Señor fue servido de embiar a la ciudad del Cuzco, a 31 del mes de Março, lueves à las dos de la tarde; con particulares misericordias suyas como se experimentaron en el tiempo de su mayor ruyna* (Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1651).

How News Was Gathered and Disseminated

Most news was copied from European gazettes which arrived in Veracruz twice a year with the official fleet from Spain. This happened in the English colonies as well. John Campbell's *Boston News-Letter* reprinted news stories from English periodicals, and some of its "news" stories were five months old. In Spanish America, the sea voyage from Europe took months although pirate attacks sometimes delayed the news even more. Some news sheets mention the cities where the story was first published, e.g., Madrid, Seville, Amsterdam, Lima, etc., but the vast majority give no indication of their original source.

Letters were another news source. The word *carta* (letter) appears frequently in many headlines. Letters were either printed verbatim or used in part, but the author was usually not identified. There are some exceptions, however. A letter from the Great Turk to the King of Spain and a letter from General Pedro de Mata to the Governor of China were printed.[38]

Other sources of news that have been already referred to included treaties and royal appointments. Royal and religious decrees and statutes were also sources. For instance, a royal edict requiring the Portuguese to register was the source of a 1641 news sheet, the only broadside in the García Icazbalceta Collection.

Audience and Distribution

Whether they contained American or European news or whether they were firsthand accounts or a rehashing of official documents, *relaciones* were awaited with great expectation. As mentioned earlier, most *relaciones* were sold by printer/publishers in Mexico City. Just as newspapers were shared in coffee houses and public houses in colonial English America, one Mexican news sheet was probably read by many readers. In addition, some Mexico City *hojas* must have reached the hinterland, but bad roads and primitive transportation probably added to the inherent difficulties of disseminating the news. The audience for news sheets was also limited by the low level of literacy, governmental and ecclesiastical censorship, high production costs, and the relatively small size of the Spanish-speaking population. The lack of an adequate paper supply was also a major problem that prohibited widespread distribution.

Printers/Publishers

The *hojas* or *relaciones* also tell us about the men and women who published them. They indicate, for example, that the printing art at that time was very international in character. Juan Pablos, who was mentioned earlier in regard to the 1542 *hoja,* was a native of Brescia, Lombardy. His name in Italian was Paoli,

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[38]*Copia de carta que el licenciado Don Francisco de Ballejo y de la Cueva, corregidor de Carrión escrive a su Majestad, en su Consejo Real de Castilla en tres de abril, de 1635* (Mexico: Bernardo Calderón, no date); *Carta ques escrivió del exercito el padre fr. Francisco de Tarazana, lector de artes en el convento de los Capuchinos de Pamplona al padre guardián de los Capuchinos del convento de Zaragoça. En que le da cuenta del cerco que los dos generales de Francia tenían puesto a Fuente Rabia, el Príncipe de Conde por tierra y el Arçobispo de Burdeos por mar* (Mexico: Bernardo Calderón, 1639); *Relación verdadera de algunas cosas particulares de España, en el año de 1649. Y assí mesmo un tanto de una carta, que el gran Turco embió a su Magestad, que Dios guarde, la qual trujo un embaxador suyo* (Mexico: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, circa 1649).

which translated into Spanish is Pablos. He worked for the Seville-based firm of Juan Cromberger which had a monopoly on all printing in Mexico City. Cromberger was a highly successful German printer who had settled in Spain.[39]

The contract that Cromberger and Pablos signed also tells us a lot about both European and Latin American printing businesses during the sixteenth century. According to Carlos Castañeda, Pablos and his pressman, Gil Barbero, agreed to...

> furnish a press and the necessary type and equipment to the value of one hundred thousand maravedis (about $3,000 [in 1940s dollars]), to pay for the cost of its transportation and the passage of the two printers, to furnish them board and the necessary spending money for the trip, and to pay the master printer one hundred and fifty ducats in gold a year and forty-eight ducats to the pressman. Pablos was furthermore to receive one-fifth of the net profits, but he was not to use his name in any imprint. Pablos was to destroy all type worn out, to prevent its being used by any other press. Cromberger obtained from the king a monopoly not only in the printing business but in the sale of all books imported from Spain. Pablos was bound by the contract for a period of ten years as printer, administrator, legal representative, and bookseller of Juan Cromberger, while the pressman was to serve three years before he could be relived of his obligations. A Negro slave was given to Pablos as assistant. The terms as to the minimum work to be turned out were extremely severe. Pablos was to increase production to an average of three thousand pages a day and to be responsible for each individual page.[40]

On Cromberger's death, Pablos went into business for himself and retained the monopoly. In 1558, several printers, Antonio de Espinosa, Antonio Alvarez, Sebastian Gutierrez, and Juan Rodriquez, successfully petitioned the king to abolish Pablos' monopoly.[41] The printing establishment of Pablos passed to Pedro Ocharte in 1560.[42] Slowly presses spread to Puebla, Guadalajara, Veracruz, and other cities in the Spanish empire. Among the names that appear in the *hojas volantes* in the Benson collection are Diego Garrido, Francisco Salvago, Pedro de Quiñones, Juan Ruíz, Hipólito de Rivera, Juan José Guillena Carrascoso, and, most importantly, Bernardo Calderón.

Most of the *relaciones* in the collection were printed by the Calderón family, which operated a printing business in Mexico City for 132 years. Founded by Bernardo Calderón in 1631, the firm passed to his widow, Paula de Benavides, on his death in 1641. She ran the establishment from 1641 to 1684. Other widows also carried on their husbands' firms. The widow of Diego Garrido ran his business for several years after his death.[43] The widow of Francisco Rodríquez Lupercio ran that printing firm from 1683 to 1694 although her real name is not known. This is not unusual because the imprint of these firms typically read

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[39]Castañeda, "The Beginning of Printing in America," 674-675.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Agüeros de la Portilla. *Documentos para la historia de la primitiva tipografía mexicana*, 368.

[42]Lepidus, *The History of Mexican Journalism*, 7.

[43]José Toribio Medina, *Historia de la imprenta en los antiguos dominios españoles de América y Oceánia* (Santiago de Chile: Fondo Histórico y Bibliográfico José Toribio Medina, 1958), I: 145-47.

"the widow of" (*viuda de...*). Benavides, for example, was only known as the *viuda de Bernardo Calderón* in all the *hojas volantes* that appear in the collection.

Many scholars have attributed the success of these *viudas* to some man in the background — a son, son-in-law, or employee. Hispanic historians, who studied early printing, were unwilling to concede that a woman could run a printing establishment on her own. Benavides had four sons, Antonio, Gabriel, Diego, and Bernardo, and two daughters, María and Micaela. Even though all four sons entered the Church, some scholars credited Antonio with being the real boss of the printing establishment from 1645 until his death in 1668. After Antonio's death, Pedro de Quiñones, who operated his own firm for a number of years, went to work for Señora Calderón. Some historians have questioned whether Quiñones was the guiding force behind the widow of Bernardo Calderón firm. When Señora Calderón left the firm to her daughter, María Calderón Benavides, many scholars again refused to give her credit, pointing out that she married Juan Ribera, the brother of printer Hipólito de Rivera. Modern scholars are beginning to question some of these earlier assumptions, pointing out that a gender bias contributed to these conclusions.

Printing, nonetheless, was a family affair. Both parents and the siblings were usually involved. Everybody pitched in and did everything – the reporting and writing, when necessary, typesetting, layout, printing, promotion, and distribution. In most cases, these printing families were also booksellers. The Calderón and Garrido firms both sold books. It was also common for printing families to intermarry, thus passing on valuable molds, presses, etc.

Format

Although there may have been some writing involved, printers probably did more editing than writing. No one really knows how much editing went on, but it would be interesting to compare the Mexican examples with the few European originals that exist to see how much editing was actually done. Spelling tended to be inconsistent throughout much of this period, which may be attributable to the fact that the language was in a state of flux. There was even spelling inconsistency within individual firms. Headlines were long but gave the reader a good indication of the contents.[44]

The layout for *relaciones* was not standardized. Only five *hojas* in the collection were laid out in columns; most used single-line presentation. When the *hojas* evolved from reporting one item to covering more news, news from Spain generally came first and, if there were any, the appointments *(provisiones y mercedes)* came last. Generally speaking, graphics were not used. The *relación* about the comet in Turkey did have an illustration, but it was exceptional.

News sheets were usually reproduced in one or more leaves in folio although there are examples of eight quartos, one broadside, and three in octavo in the

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[44]The following is typical of headlines for *hojas*: "True Relation of a masquerade, which the silversmiths' guild of Mexico and devotees of the glorious San Isidro the Patron Saint of Madrid held in honor of his glorious beatification." The headlines were long but gave the reader a good indication of the contents.*Verdadera Relación de una mascara, que los artifces del gremio de la plateria de México y devotos del glorioso San Isidro el Labrador de Madrid, lucieron en honra de su gloriosa beatifcacion. Compuesta por Juan Rodriguez Abril platero* (Mexico: Pedro Gutierrez, 1621).

García Icazbalceta collection. Average length was four to eight pages. However, there are several sixteen-page examples; the longest news sheet in the collection is twenty-eight pages. Occasionally they were paginated.

Conclusion

By modern standards, the *hojas volantes* may seem crude. Nonetheless, they filled a need for news for more than a century and a half. They also laid the foundation for the periodicals that followed. While they lacked many characteristics of newspapers—periodicity, a regular title, pagination, variety, and timeliness—they helped develop a reading audience for news.

It should also be remembered that the printers of the *relaciones* were working against great odds: a low level of literacy, poor transportation, lack of paper, expensive equipment, and censorship. Despite this, they left an interesting social history of what colonial Spanish-American readers thought was newsworthy, or what, reading between the lines of civil and ecclesiastic censorship, the government thought was fit to print. Most importantly, they paved the way for the first regularly published periodicals, the *gazettas* and *mercurios* of the eighteenth century.

Greater Distance = Declining Interest: Massachusetts Printers and Protections for a Free Press, 1783-1791

Carol Sue Humphrey *

In this anniversary year of the adoption of the First Amendment, it is useful to look at the ideas concerning the freedom of the press during the years prior to 1791. Historical mythology often gives credit to the printers of Revolutionary America for leading the fight to establish freedom of expression in the United States. This statement fits the history of the state of Massachusetts. Several 18th-century printers of Massachusetts, particularly Benjamin Edes and Isaiah Thomas, form part of the pantheon of newspaper people who helped push for the liberty of the press following the American Revolution. However, a closer study of the efforts of Massachusetts publishers in the area of freedom of expression during the 1780s reveals that their attempts to establish protections for the press became more strident the closer to home was the concern and the more costly was the threat. Five publishers operated their businesses in Massachusetts for the entire period from the end of the Revolution until the adoption of the Federal Bill of Rights. Thomas Adams and John Nourse, Benjamin Edes, John Mycall, Benjamin Russell, and Isaiah Thomas all published their newspapers throughout the period during which the United States hammered out a new government. During this period, Massachusetts printers protested loudly against actions of the state government that hurt the press but expressed little concern over what the national government did.

Throughout the 1780s, Bay State printers praised newspapers as the major source of news and general information for the public. Benjamin Russell, publisher of the *Massachusetts Centinel*, urged people to save their newspapers in order "to preserve a just, particular and impartial History of the transactions of the present day."[1] In the *Independent Chronicle*, "Impartialis" declared that a newspaper was "the poor man's library," the means by which most people "gain their information of the world at large."[2] A poet in the *Massachusetts Spy* praised newspapers as "the springs of knowledge" for all Americans.[3] "Acirema" declared in the *Worcester Magazine* that "without political knowledge the people cannot secure their liberties, and this necessary information they receive by the

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[1] *Massachusetts Centinel*, March 17, 1787.
[2] *Independent Chronicle*, May 25, 1786.
[3] *Essex Journal*, June 8, 1785.

medium of News-Papers."[4] At the time of Shays's Rebellion, several printers declared that many of the problems in the backcountry were a result of the lack of communication because few newspapers were published in the counties where most of the trouble occurred.[5] Clearly, Massachusetts printers believed that the productions of their small presses played an important role in American society.

Because of the importance they attached to their weekly newssheets, publishers also often spoke about the importance of a free press in the operation of a republican government. Many writers praised the role of the newspapers in stirring up the people to revolt against Great Britain.[6] In an essay widely reprinted throughout the United States, "Common Sense" praised freedom of the press as the "Palladium of Liberty, the chief means of diffusing through this wide extended country those generous sentiments which delivered us from British tyranny, and formed the basis of our rising empire."[7] Another widely-published piece declared that an open press was "a security against errors, for where there is a free Press, no false doctrine in religion, policy, or physic, can be broached and remain undetected." Furthermore, a free press was "a great buckler against oppression" and "a standing resource in case of an unforseen calamity," for publication provided the means of explaining and solving all political problems.[8] According to these pieces published by Massachusetts printers, a free and open press was essential for the operation of a republican government such as the one desired by the American people.

The first major threat to the ability of Massachusetts printers to operate as they chose came in the form of the state stamp act, passed in the spring of 1785. Designed to help raise money to pay off the war debt, the act resulted in screams of protest from the state's publishers.[9] All of them castigated the legislature for trying to undermine the liberty of the press. In the *Massachusetts Centinel*, "Lucius" declared that "the freedom of the Press is the greatest bulwark of Liberty, and the most sacred right of Freedom." He expressed great shock that his home state had struck "a blow at the root of this inestimable right."[10] John Mycall, publisher of Newburyport's *Essex Journal*, stated that he was "resolved never to print a News-Paper burdened with a Stamp in a land of Liberty, and where the Press is said to be Free!" Rather than submit to the stamp legislation, he would either discontinue his paper or move his printing operation to New Hampshire."[11] Isaiah Thomas, publisher of the *Massachusetts Spy,* was vocal in

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[4] *Worcester Magazine*, 3rd week in May 1786.

[5] *Boston Gazette*, October 16, 1786, February 26, 1787.

[6] Worcester Magazine, 3rd week in May 1786; *Boston Gazette*, September 17, 1798.

[7] *Massachusetts Centinel*, January 19, 1785.

[8] *Massachusetts Spy*, December 4, 1788.

[9] *Essex Journal*, May 11, 1785; *Independent Chronicle*, May 12, 1785; *Boston Gazette*, May 16, 23, 1785; Clifford K. Shipton, *Isaiah Thomas: Printer, Patriot, and Philanthropist, 1749-1831* (Rochester, N.Y.: The Printing House of Leo Hart, 1948), 42; Clyde Augustus Duniway, *The Development of Freedom of the Press in Massachusetts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1906), 119-20, 136-37; Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 250 Years, 1690 to 1940* (New York: MacMillan, 1962 [1941]), 143-44.

[10] Essay from *Massachusetts Centinel*, Reprinted in *Vermont Gazette*, July 11, 1785; Van Beck Hall, *Politics Without Parties: Massachusetts, 1780-1791* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972, 117; Joseph T. Buckingham, *Specimens of Newspaper Literature*, 2 vols. (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1971 [1850]), 2:33-34.

[11] *Essex Journal*, June 8, 1785.

his opposition to the stamp tax, declaring it to be a "bad policy" which violated the state's Bill of Rights by interfering with the freedom of the press.[12] The *Boston Gazette* urged the legislature to rethink its action and to "free the public from that bar to political wisdom" by repealing the stamp tax.[13]

The printers continually criticized the state legislature for attempting to limit the liberty of the press, but the issue of money played a role in their protests as well. The stamp tax would increase the cost of their newspapers and the printers feared that this would endanger their business. Several of them stated that the tax would raise the price of their productions by 1/3, a change which would make newspapers too expensive for many people to purchase.[14] Furthermore, the printers of neighboring states would be able to undersell local publishers, which would further injure Massachusetts newspapers.[15] The result would be the demise of locally-published news sheets and the financial ruin of local printers.[16] In the opinion of the publishers of the Bay State, the disappearance of newspapers because of the state action could only be seen as "a clog to the Liberty of the Press."[17]

The Massachusetts state legislature responded to the protests and repealed the stamp tax. Still needing a source of revenue, however, they replaced the stamp tax with a duty on newspaper advertisements.[18] This measure produced even more complaints, for it struck at the financial mainstay of newspapers — advertising. State publishers continued to criticize the assembly for attacking the freedom of the press. Leading the way in the fight were Benjamin Edes of Boston and Isaiah Thomas of Worcester. Both men thought the advertisement tax would destroy the newspapers of Massachusetts and urged its repeal.[19] Edes urged printers to stay out of Massachusetts because they could not operate their businesses freely,[20] while Thomas called on the towns of Massachusetts to instruct their representatives to work for the repeal of the obnoxious legislation.[21] Thomas even went so far as to suspend publication of the *Massachusetts Spy* for over two years. He replaced his newspaper with the *Worcester Magazine*, a publication which was not covered by the act taxing advertisements.[22] Upon resuming the publication of the *Spy* in 1788, Thomas prayed that "Heaven grant that the FREEDOM of the PRESS, on which depends the FREEDOM of the PEOPLE, may, in the United States, be ever guarded with a watchful eye, and defended from shackles, of every form and shape, until the trump of the celestial Messen-

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[12] *Massachusetts Spy*, May 12, June 2, 1785.

[13] *Boston Gazette*, May 30, 1785.

[14] *Essex Journal*, April 6, 1785; *Massachusetts Spy*, May 12, 1785.

[15] *Massachusetts Spy*, April 21, May 12, 1785; *Massachusetts Centinel*, May 4, 1785.

[16] *Massachusetts Centinel*, May 4, 1785; *Massachusetts Spy*, May 12, 1785; *Independent Chronicle*, May 12, 1785.

[17] *Essex Journal*, April 6, 1785.

[18] Hall, *Politics Without Parties*, 118.

[19] *Boston Gazette*, August 22, 1785; *Massachusetts Spy*, January 26, March 30, 1786; *Worcester Magazine*, April 5, 1786, 4th week in July 1786; Buckingham, *Specimens of Newspaper Literature*, 1:197, 242.

[20] *Boston Gazette*, March 5, 1787.

[21] *Worcester Magazine*, 2nd week in May 1786.

[22] Handbill published by Isaiah Thomas, April 3, 1786; *Worcester Magazine*, 4th week in July 1786, 4th week in March 1787, 4th week in March 1788; *Massachusetts Spy*, April 3, 1788.

ger shall announce the final dissolution of all things."[23]

Printers criticized the advertisement tax as an infringement upon the liberty of the press, but, once more, the issue of money was also clearly involved. The advertisement tax could not help but hurt the financial status of newspapers, because increased advertisements enabled a printer to sell his paper more cheaply, thus encouraging a larger circulation.[24] Isaiah Thomas declared that "the tax on News-paper Advertisements has a direct tendency not only to restrain, but to destroy those necessary vehicles of public information, by taking away their only support; for Advertisements are the only support of News-papers in this Country, where News-papers are at so low a price."[25] The printers of Massachusetts suffered as a result of the advertisement tax, for many reduced the size of their newspapers in order to continue publication. Six were forced to cease production altogether.[26] Isaiah Thomas expressed the feelings of all the printers when he declared that "if therefore the Publication of News-papers is not by Law prohibited, yet if a law is made which takes away the means of printing and circulating News-papers, it amounts to the same thing, and is of course an unconstitutional restraint on the Liberty of the Press."[27] The printers of Massachusetts appealed to the General Court to repeal the act, stating that the money raised from the tax was not enough to justify the financial impact of the legislation on publishers. In 1788, the state legislature finally agreed and repealed the advertisement tax.[28]

With such strong efforts to defend the freedom of the press at the state level, it would not be surprising if the Massachusetts printers had also worked diligently to protect freedom of expression at the national level. That, however, did not prove to be the case. During the late 1780s, the newspapers of the Bay State, as was true in all the states,[29] covered the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia and the ratification process that followed, but they made few specific suggestions concerning what should be included in the new government.

During the meeting of the Convention, the press urged the delegates to work to solve the problems of the United States through measures that would improve the status of the national government.[30] They praised the delegates for their

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[23]*Massachusetts Spy*, April 3, 1788.

[24]*Essex Journal*, November 9, 1785; *Independent Chronicle*, May 25, 1786; Clarence S. Brigham, *Journals and Journeymen: A Contribution to the History of Early American Newspapers* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950), 27; John Bixler Hench, "The Newspaper in a Republic. Boston's *Centinel* and *Chronicle*, 1784-1801," (Ph.D. dissertation, Clark University, 1979), 93.

[25]Handbill published by Isaiah Thomas, April 3, 1786; *Essex Journal*, April 19, 1786.

[26]*Worcester Magazine*, 4th week in June 1786, 4th week in July 1786, 1st week in October 1766, 4th week in March 1787; *Essex Journal*, October 16, December 20, January 10, 1787.

[27]Handbill published by Isaiah Thomas, April 3, 1786; *Essex Journal*, April 19, 1786.

[28]Boston Printers' Petition, February 8, 1786, Copy in Book Trades Collection, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts, Original in Massachusetts State Archives, Senate File 718; Advertising Tax Collections for Suffolk County, Massachusetts, February 10 1786, Copy in Book Trades Collection, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts, Original in Massachusetts State Archives, Senate File 718-3; Committee Report to General Court, February 10, 1786, copy in Book Trades Collection, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass., original in Massachusetts State Archives, Senate File 718-2 and 718-4.

[29]Robert Allan Rutland, *Newsmongers: Journalism in the Life of the Nation, 1690-1972* (New York: Dial Press, 1973), 58.

[30]*Massachusetts Centinel*, June 13, 30, 1787; *Independent Chronicle*, July 19, August 9, 1787.

"wisdom and patriotism"[31] and urged the people to support the results of the Convention, "whether an addition to the old constitution, or the adoption of a new one."[32]

During the ratification debates, Massachusetts printers strongly supported the adoption of the Constitution, for they believed that the new proposed government would improve the stability of the United States.[33] The printer of the *Massachusetts Centinel* stated that the Constitution was "the result of much wisdom, candour, and those mutual concessions, without which America can never expect to harmonize in any system of Commerce of Government."[34] A writer in the *Independent Chronicle* called on the American people to "be of one heart, and of one mind" to "seize the golden opportunity to secure a stable government, and to become a respectable nation" by ratifying the Constitution.[35] The *Boston Gazette* declared the nation's problems "will gradually subside, till they finally disappear, if we have but wisdom and firmness speedily to adopt the New Federal Constitution."[36] All the printers seemed pleased when the Constitution had been ratified by enough states to ensure that the new government went into operation.[37]

Massachusetts printers took particular interest in the actions of their own ratifying convention, which met from January 9 to February 6, 1788. Numerous comments concerning the meeting appeared while it was in session and the printers expressed much pleasure when the state ratified the Constitution.[38] Many delegates to the convention had hesitated to approve the new government, for they felt that it did not contain enough protection for individual liberties. They insisted that the Constitution must be amended prior to its taking effect. A compromise was negotiated in which the new form of government was ratified with suggested amendments attached. The need for amendments was considered crucial by many delegates, but most of them seemed more concerned with state power and financial and judicial concerns rather than personal freedoms. The only mention of the liberty of the press during the ratifying convention was an amendment for its protection presented by Samuel Adams on the last day of the convention. The proposed change was quickly voted down and the Constitution ratified (with proposed amendments) by a vote of 187 to 168.[39]

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[31] *Independent Chronicle*, August 9, 1787.

[32] *Massachusetts Centinel*, June 13, 30, 1787; *Independent Chronicle*, July 19, August 9, 1787.

[33] *Massachusetts Centinel*, September 29, November 17, December 11 1787, November 1, 1788; *Boston Gazette*, November 15, December 10, 1787, January 14, 1788; *Independent Chronicle*, January 10, 1788.

[34] *Massachusetts Centinel*, January 9, 1788.

[35] *Independent Chronicle*, June 5, 1788.

[36] *Boston Gazette*, October 15, 1787.

[37] *Boston Gazette*, May 12, June 9, 23, July 7, 1788; *Massachusetts Spy*, July 10, 1788.

[38] *Massachusetts Centinel*, January 9, 16, February 11, 1788; *Independent Chronicle*, January 10 to March 13, 1786; February 7, 1788; *Boston Gazette*, February 11, 1788; *Essex Journal*, February 13, 1788; Augustus W. Clason, "The Convention of Massachusetts," *Magazine of American History* XIV (December 1885): 545.

[39] Duniway, *Development of Freedom of the Press*, 137-40; Samuel B. Harding, *The Contest Over the Ratification of the Federal Constitution in the State of Massachusetts* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1896), 98; Robert Allen Rutland, *The Birth of the Bill of Rights, 1776-1791* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1955), 148; Arthur N. Holcombe, "Massachusetts and the Federal Constitution of 1787," Chapter 13 in Albert Bushnell Hart, ed., *Commonwealth History of Massachusetts*, vol. 3 (New York: States

Some newspapers discussed the issue of press liberty and the proposed new national government, but it never became a major issue. Several opponents of the Constitution criticized the press for failing to cover all sides of the issue, but the printers stated that they published whatever materials the public presented them.[40] "Can-didus," an essayist in the *Independent Chronicle*, stated that "freedom of debate in all national questions, has ever been held sacred among a free people; the great subject now submitted to the public, most certainly claims this indulgence, as on its impartial discussion, every thing that is valuable depends."[41] Massachusetts printers apparently agreed with this sentiment, for a lively debate concerning the Constitution took place in several Bay State papers prior to the meeting of the Massachusetts convention.[42] Some newspaper essayists worried over the failure of the Constitution to provide specific protection for a free press, but most writers seemed unconcerned.[43] Apparently, most people did not worry about the lack of protection for the press in the Constitution because the necessary protections already existed in state bills of rights. The Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 provided that "the liberty of the press is essential to the security of freedom in a State; it ought not, therefore, to be restrained in this commonwealth." The delegates to the ratifying convention considered this provision to be protection enough for the liberty of the press.[44] Bay State printers apparently agreed, for they did not urge the state convention to include protection for the media in the proposed amendments attached to the state's ratification of the Constitution.[45] Except for the convention proposal of Samuel Adams, the issue of press freedom never came up in Massachusetts during the ratification debates.

Attitudes in Massachusetts concerning the need to protect the freedom of the press at the national level had not changed by the time the state legislature considered the proposed Bill of Rights in 1791. Those who had previously supported the Constitution felt that it did not need to be amended, while its opponents were still more concerned with the issues of state vs. national power and judicial rights. Both the House and the Senate of the Massachusetts General Court ap-

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History Company, 1929), 399-400; Irving Brant, *The Bill of Rights: Its Origin and Meaning* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 39; Bernard Schwartz, *The Bill of Rights: A Documentary History*, 2 vols. (New York: Chelsea House, 1971), 2:674-75, 681, 707; Clason, "The Convention of Massachusetts," 544.

The complete minutes and debates of the Massachusetts Ratifying Convention may be found in Schwartz, *The Bill of Rights*, vol. 2: 676-723.

[40] *Boston Gazette*. December 3, 1787.

[41] *Independent Chronicle*, January 3, 1788.

[42] See, for example, *Independent Chronicle*, December 1787 and January 1788; *Worcester Magazine*, December 1787 and January 1788.

[43] *Boston Gazette*, December 3, 1787; *Worcester Magazine*, 1st week in February 1788. Referenced in Harding, *Contest Over Ratification*, 36.

[44] *Boston Gazette*, October 22, 1787; No author given, *The Perpetual Laws of the Commonwealth of Massaschusetts, 1780-1788* (Worcester: Isaiah Thomas, 1788), 1:7; Duniway, *Development of Freedom of the Press*, 130, 136, 138-40; Rutland, *Bill of Rights*, 107, 108, 112; Leonard W. Levy, "Bill of Rights," 258-306 in Leonard W. Levy, ed., *Essays on the Making of the Constitution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 267, 299; Jeffrey A. Smith, "Public Opinion and the Press Clause," *Journalism History* 14 (Spring 1987): 8; Schwartz, *The Bill of Rights*, vol. 2: 676.

[45] Throughout the ratification debate in Massachusetts, the newspapers often carried materials discussing the need for amendments to the proposed Constitution, but the need to protect the press was not a major issue. See, for example, *Independent Chronicle*, September 16, 1788, February 5, 1789.

proved what would later become the First Amendment, but they never passed a joint resolution to finalize their approval. Therefore, the state of Massachusetts failed to ratify the amendment which provided safeguards for the press at the national level.[46] Newspaper printers seemed unconcerned about the failure of Massachusetts to ratify the proposed Bill of Rights. The public prints carried very little information about the actions of the state legislature concerning the amendments and expressed no desire that a protection for the liberty of the press become a part of the national government.[47] Leonard Levy has stated that "the history of the framing and ratification of the Bill of Rights indicates slight passion on the part of anyone to enshrine personal liberties in the fundamental law of the land."[48] This was certainly true in Massachusetts, for no one pushed for the adoption of the Bill of Rights. The printers of Massachusetts did not perceive actions of the federal government to be any sort of threat to them, as the state taxes of 1785 and 1786 had been. Even the adoption of a postal duty on newspapers failed to generate much excitement. Massachusetts news sheets mentioned the new law, which passed Congress on February 20, 1792, but they did not perceive it as a major threat to their livelihood.[49] Even Isaiah Thomas, the printer who had stopped publication of his newspaper because of the state ad tax, saw no problem with the national postal duty. His only comment was that the bill provided for the establishment of a post road from Worcester to Providence, Rhode Island.[50] Clearly, at least in Massachusetts, distance from the government in question made a difference in evaluating the issue of a free press and how much it needed to be protected.

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[46]Duniway, *Development of Freedom of the Press*, 141; Levy, "Bill of Rights," 287; Denys Myers, *Massachusetts and the First Ten Amendments to the Constitution* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1936), 8-9, 11; Hall, *Politics Without Parties*, 327.

[47]David A. Anderson, "The Origins of the Press Clause," *UCLA Law Review* 30 (1983): 486; *Massachusetts Spy*, February 17, 1789. The printers in question never published very much about the proposed Bill of Rights, and most of what they did print consisted of copies of the amendments and legislative discussions of them. The average percentage of space allotted to discussion of the Bill of Rights in any one month never exceeded 9.44% of total available space. See the Table on the next page for a more detailed view of the space allotted to the Bill of Rights.

The printers continued to take interest in local free press issues throughout this period. For example, several newspapers gave extensive coverage to the libel trial of Edmund Freeman, printer of Boston's *American Herald*. *Independent Chronicle*, February 4, 1790, February 24, March 3, 10, 17, 24, 1791; *Massachusetts Centinel*, February 10, 1790, February 26, 1791.

[48]Levy, "Bill of Rights," 289.

[49]"An Act to Establish the Post Office and Post Roads Within the United States," *The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States*, 2nd Congress, 1791-1793 (Washington, D. C: Gales and Seaton, 1849), 1333-341; *Massachusetts Centinel*, February 26, 1791, February 5, 1792; *Independent Chronicle*, February 23, March 8, 1792; *Boston Gazette*, March 12, 1792.

[50]*Massachusetts Spy*, March 8, 1792.

Percentage of Space Allotted to the Bill of Rights, 1789-1791

Date	*Centinel*[1]	*Chronicle*[2]	*Gazette*[3]	*Journal*[4]	*Spy*[5]	*Avg.*
6-89	4.69	9.77	0.00	3.13	7.42	5.00
7-89	1.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.31	0.43
8-89	5.79	12.11	12.50	4.69	12.11	9.44
9-89	0.00	2.34	2.08	21.25	6.25	6.38
10-89	0.00	1.25	0.00	0.78	1.25	0.66
11-89	0.30	0.00	0.42	0.00	0.00	0.14
12-89	0.46	0.00	0.00	0.31	0.94	0.34
1-90	0.23	0.00	4.17	2.73	0.00	1.43
2-90	0.00	0.39	0.52	0.78	0.78	0.49
3-90	0.00	3.58	1.67	3.13	0.00	1.68
4-90	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5-90	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6-90	0.23	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.39	0.12
7-90	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
8-90	1.37	0.39	1.67	0.00	0.00	0.67
9-90	0.00	0.00	1.56	0.00	0.00	0.31
10-90	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
11-90	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
12-90	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1-91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2-91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3-91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4-91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5-91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6-91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7-91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
8-91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
9-91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
10-91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
11-91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
12-91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1-92	0.00	0.31	0.00	0.39	0.39	0.22
2-92	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3-92	5.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.18

*The dates used for the study are from June 1789 until March 1792. This includes the period from James Madison's first proposal of amendments until Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson notified the state governors that the Bill of Rights had been approved.

[1]The *Massachusetts Centinel* was published in Boston by Benjamin Russell.

[2]*The Independent Chronicle* was published in Boston by Thomas Adams and John Nourse.

[3]*The Boston Gazette* was published in Boston by Benjamin Edes.

[4]*The Essex Journal* was published in Newburyport by John Mycall.

[5]*The Massachusetts Spy* was published in Worcester by Isaiah Thomas.

"To Avoid the Coming Storm": Hezekiah Niles' *Weekly Register* as a Voice of North-South Moderation, 1811-1836

Bill Kovarik*

Hezekiah Niles feared what seemed to be an approaching civil war, and between 1811 and 1836, as editor and publisher of the Baltimore-based Niles Weekly Register, he searched for ways to "avoid the coming storm."

Although Niles has long been considered a figure of national importance in both journalism and economics, scholars have not examined his attempt to mediate the North-South crisis during its critical formative stages. This paper looks at Niles' attempts at mediation in the context of his economic and journalistic philosophy.

Niles was a proponent of the "American System," an early economic development philosophy favored by Whigs (later Republicans). The philosophy called for diversified agriculture; tariffs to protect manufacturers; public works projects; and universal public education. In order to avoid the coming storm, Niles believed that the South could gradually move away from its plantation based slave economy towards a Southern version of the American System, thus decreasing economic and political tensions and preserving the Union.

Although Northerners admired Niles, his views were rejected in Southern states. Editors in Georgia and South Carolina labeled him the "great enemy of the South" and an "orang-outang" with a "monkey system." Mobs of fire eaters tarred, feathered and hung effigies of Niles during the "tariff of abominations" controversy in 1828 and the nullification crisis of 1833.

Niles' ideas about a gradual evolution of the South would be interesting in and of themselves, in the sense that "roads not taken" are an important (and often neglected) part of the context of historical events. However, Niles' ideas have a direct importance because they foreshadow Atlanta editor Henry Grady's post-war concepts about the "New South," which also featured diversified agriculture, tariff protection, public works and universal public education. That Niles should have seen the alternative 40 years before civil war broke out (and almost 80 years before Grady) is strong evidence of his powers of insight.

Niles became embittered in his final years as editor in the 1830s, and at one point advocated military force to end the nullification movement in the South. Ironically, such a move might have prematurely sparked the very civil war that Niles tried to avoid.

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Niles and His Weekly Register

Niles Weekly Register was the prototype of a modern news magazine, conceived with a broad view of the mission of the press and the publication's future value to historians. Frederick Jackson Turner, Albert Beveredge and Frederick Hudson have put it in a class by itself as a valuable part of the historic record.[1] Thomas Jefferson called it a "valuable repository of facts and documents."[2]

Nearly two centuries after the first issues of the *Register* rolled off a flatbed press in Baltimore, many editions are still accessible in their original form in public libraries, carefully bound by volume and indexed by topic. The pages are made of rag or hemp paper, which has preserved the *Register* as Niles intended. Generally 16 pages a week, it contained no advertising; readers got more news from the book-sized weekly magazine than from most broadsheet dailies of the era.

News items were incisive, frequently humorous and always compelling, and Niles' concept of news took in the broad scope of human life. The *Register* kept close track of economics, technology, science, medicine, geography, archaeology, the weather, and stories of human interest, such as a dog who rescued another dog from a river or the case of a blind woman restored to sight. Niles printed many items about ballooning and predicted that someday man would build machines to fly — although he doubted that steam engines could propel them. Riverboat disasters were also covered; early accounts were short on facts and long on adjectives, but between 1816 and 1820, Niles would begin stressing facts over emotions.[3]

The *Register* also reproduced historical documents, not for their news value, but rather to preserve and circulate them. These included a memoir by Daniel Boone about the opening of the Kentucky frontier, a 1791 report on manufacturing by Alexander Hamilton, and an 1808 Treasury Department report on roads, canals and other "internal improvements." The documents, the wide variety of guest essays and the carefully reported facts from many walks of life give the *Register* an intrinsic historical value.[4]

The Baltimore Editor

Hezekiah Niles combined the influences of a Quaker upbringing, a merchant's pragmatism, a revolutionary's idealism and a politician's flair for close debate.

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[1] Phillip R. Schmidt, *Hezekiah Niles and American Economic Nationalism: A Political Biography,* (NY: Arno Press, 1982), Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Kansas.

[2] Norval Neil Luxon, *Niles Weekly Register: News Magazine of the Ninteenth Century* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1947), 294.

[3] It is possible to trace a remarkable transformation toward objectivity in the technique of spot news coverage in Niles Register -- a transformation which occurred later in other newspapers and which has often been ascribed to the influence of telegraphy. (See, for example, Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News,* New York: Basic Books, 1978). In one of the earliest accounts of a riverboat steam boiler explosion, for example, no date or number of dead or injured was given. The accident was "terrible beyond conception." (*Register* 10:265, Jun 15, 1816) But in an 1821 account, details of a riverboat accident were given factually -- the name of the boat, the number killed and injured, the description of the force of the explosion. (*Register* 19:250, June 2 1821; also 30:200, May 13, 1826).

[4] Luxon, 299.

He was born in 1777 in Chester County, Pennsylvania as his mother fled from Wilmington, Delaware just ahead of the British army. Although his family were Quakers, his father quit the church to fight in the Revolutionary army; (he rejoined after the war). Niles' family moved back to Wilmington, and Niles studied in a Quaker school. The influence would later tell in his personal hatred of slavery and his distress over the need for moderation in the face of what he saw as evil.

When he was 12 years old, as Niles later told the story, his father took him to see a procession in Wilmington of men who were dressed entirely in American-made clothes. The point of the procession, said his father, was that American manufactures would help "render the country independent."[5] The widespread sentiment toward economic independence as the next step in the American Revolution deeply influenced Niles, fueling his later quest for protection for American manufacturers.[6]

Niles was apprenticed to a Philadelphia printer at age 17 and gained a reputation as fast, accurate typesetter. He frequently took advantage of Philadelphia's position as the nation's capitol to listen to debates at the House of Representatives. He also wrote several items for the Jeffersonian *Aurora*, especially on the Jay treaty, believing that the Federalists had been too easy lenient with British.[7]

Along with his father's soldierly hatred of the British, Niles had inherited another reason for Anglophobia. As he noted in at least six instances in the *Register*, his mother, while pregnant with him in 1777, narrowly escaped death at the hands of a bayonet-wielding British grenadier who proposed "to kill two rebels at once...."[8] His Anglophobia was significant because in later years he was suspicious of British motives in their attempts to stop the trans-Atlantic slave trade; in addition, he deeply feared British intervention on behalf of the South in a civil war.

By 1799, Niles started a printing business in Wilmington, Delaware with a partner, but by 1801 the business went bankrupt. He served as a local politician for several years and by 1805 he began a weekly magazine called the *Apollo*. Like the *Register*, it contained no advertising; unlike the *Register,* it avoided political or religious controversy. It failed that same year. Niles moved to Baltimore in 1805 to become editor of the *Evening Post*, a mediocre daily broadsheet closely tied to the Democratic-Republican party. Niles used the 1805-1811 period to develop as a writer, to learn more about national affairs and to earn money to pay old debts.[9]

In June 1811, Niles sold the *Evening Post* and issued a prospectus for the *Register*. Before the first issue left the press the magazine had 1,500 subscribers. Circulation grew to about 4,000 and leveled off there for 25 years. It was perhaps

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[5] *Register* 39:252, Dec. 11, 1830.

[6] Sentiment toward increasing American economic independence was widespread around this time, particularly among Quakers; for example, the Pennsylvania Society for Manufactures, a group with many Quaker members, financed Samuel Slater's efforts to smuggle textile machinery from Britain to the U.S. See F.W. Taussig, *The Tariff History of the United States* (NY: Putnam, 1910).

[7] Schmidt, 13.

[8] *Register*, 39:250, Dec. 11, 1830.

[9] Richard G. Stone, *Hezekiah Niles as an Economist*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Series L1 No. 5, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1933) 43

the most widely circulated magazine of the era.[10] Niles never took a vacation from the *Register*, and finished 50 volumes in 25 years without a break. He was sick when he retired in 1836, at the end of volume 50, and died three years later. His son took over as editor for a few years, but sold the *Register* soon after Niles died in 1839. The publication struggled on until 1849, without strong editorial leadership and against the tide of competition from the penny press.

Assessing Hezekiah Niles

Niles is a fascinating editor who tried most of all to give an accurate picture of "The Past, The Present, For the Future," as the motto of the *Register* said each week. He is known as a forerunner of objectivity, an anomaly in the bitterly partisan press of the era. He was "a man with a sterling reputation"[11] and his *Register* has been called "the most important newspaper of the era."[12] Surprisingly, only one journalism historian, Norval Luxon in a 1947 dissertation, has written about Niles in depth.

Historian Albert J. Beveredge said Niles "was the prototype of Horace Greeley" and that the *Register* had "much the same hold on its readers that the Tribune had 30 years later."[13] Ida Tarbell, in *Tariff in our Times,* quoted Horace Greeley as saying he "sat at the feet of Niles...."[14] His national reputation even led settlers in Ohio and Michigan to name towns for him.

Niles had a reputation for unswerving accuracy. In one major dispute, his opponents questioned the accuracy of Niles' reporting of an 1816 Parliamentary speech concerning England's desire to keep America economically dependent. Historians later checked the speech against Parliamentary records and found it was correctly transcribed.[15]

Fairness played a large part in his code of conduct as well. "He was the most magnanimous of disputants, incapable of garbling the language of his opponents in the smallest degree," said historian Edward Stanwood. "In selecting speeches to illustrate debates, he invariably chose for insertion in the *Register* the strongest on each side, and he made it a point to give an equal number of them, or at least an equal space, to friends and opponents. His guileless frankness, conspicuous fairness...added immensely to the weight of his opinions on public questions."[16]

As an editorialist, Niles employed tactics of firm but friendly reasoning against Philistine prejudice in many areas, usually taking pains to seek the middle ground. Science occupied his attention early on. "Some very learned men have suspected," Niles said in 1812, "that comets were occasionally made the angry messengers of our Divine Father to teach his unbelieving children." But

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[10] Luxon, 4.

[11] Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism* (NY: Manville, 1941).

[12] James Melvin Lee, *History of American Journalism,* (Garden City, N.J., Garden City Publishing Co., 1923).

[13] Luxon, 299.

[14] Ida Tarbell, *Tariff in Our Times* (New York: MacMillan, 1911).

[15] Edward Stanwood, *American Tariff Controversies in the 19th Century* (NY: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1903), 168.

[16] Ibid., 248.

humans cannot know divine will, he said. "The proper study of mankind is man."[17] Similarly, in 1816 he argued against a superstitious view of the severely cold summer, which was not then known to have been caused by a Pacific volcano flinging ash into the atmosphere. "One class of philosophers calls every extraordinary appearance a judgment or a sign; another class views everything as the working of matter and motion. These two sets are at war with each other. The one denounces the other as superstitious or atheistical."[18]

Clearly, Niles had a talent for diplomatic debate; but it would be stretched beyond its limit in his search for alternatives to an impending civil war.

Tariff Policy: Industrial North vs. Agrarian South

In 1816, as the Napoleonic wars ended, strong international competition in trade began emerging. The competition overwhelmed American factories, which had been built quickly in a trade vacuum during what was known in the U.S. as the "War of 1812." Many American factories went bankrupt and others clamored for relief. Factory owners wanted tariffs in order to raise the price of imported goods, especially British textiles. But many Americans doubted the efficacy of tariffs and the wisdom of supporting manufacturing over agriculture. New England merchants and Southern agrarians said the government had no business helping start factories. Southerners, especially, argued that this would violate the basic agrarian values at the heart of American revolutionary philosophy. Middle Atlantic manufacturing interests disagreed, saying political independence could not be maintained without economic independence.

These two visions of America had been represented, in the 1780s and '90s, by Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton. Jefferson's 1785 *Notes on Virginia* extolled the concept of the yeoman farmer as the backbone of democracy. With regard to the tariff, the Jeffersonian creed of the era was clear: "The work shops of Europe are the most proper to furnish the supplies of manufactures in the United States." Jefferson detested the huge, dirty European factories and considered them sores on the body politic. On the other hand, Federalists led by Alexander Hamilton repeatedly called for tariffs and tax incentives to help manufacturing.[19]

Political alignments shifted between the early years of the young republic and the aftermath of the War of 1812. Federalists, now the party of New England merchants, advocated free trade and scorned tariffs. Democratic Republicans, on the other hand, begin seeing tariffs as a way to help start manufacturing in the Middle Atlantic states. A view began to crystallize in this era of a distinctly American industry, cleaner, more moral and more humane than the sweat shops of Europe.

Around this time, ex-president Jefferson, while still upholding the agrarian vision of America, began to see wisdom in economic independence. To show this important shift in views, Niles reprinted an April, 1816 letter to the *Boston Chronicle* in which Jefferson noted recent problems between the U.S., the Brit-

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[17] *Register*, 2:10, September 1812.

[18] *Register*, 11:42, Sept. 14, 1816.

[19] Alen Marcus and Howard Segal, *Technology in America*, (NY: Harcourt Brace, 1989) 45.

ish and the Barbary Pirates as a reason for economic independence:

> We must now place the manufacturer beside the agriculturalist.... The grand inquiry now is, shall we manufacture our own comforts, or go without them at the will of a foreign nation. He, therefore, who is now against domestic manufacturers must be for reducing us to dependence on that nation, or to be clothed in skins and live like wild beasts in dens and caverns. I am proud to say I am not one of these....

A year later, Niles reprinted a similar letter from Jefferson:

> I was once a doubter whether the labor of the cultivator, aided by the creative powers of the earth itself, would not produce more than that of the manufacturer alone, and unassisted by the dead subject on which he acted.... But the invention of the latter times, by labor saving machines, do as much now for the manufacturer as the earth does for the cultivator.... I much fear the effect on our infant establishments of the policy [of no tariffs].... British commerce and manufacturing will gain by beating down the competition of ours in our own markets."

Jefferson's views and the need to pay the large war deficit boosted support for a moderate tariff passed by Congress in 1816. Despite Jefferson's letters, Southerners continued to defend an exclusive agrarian ideal. Although the first reaction to the tariff of 1816 was muted, tariff proposals of the 1820s and '30s elicited wild outrage.

In outline, the argument ran something like this: Southerners believed that the plantation system could not support manufacturing. They did not want to divert capital to Northern factories. Southerners saw the issue as competition between, on the one hand, an independent yeomanry of farmers and small shopkeepers and, on the other, a commercial and financial oligarchy. Abolition of slavery, according to this view, was simply a pretext for an imperial conquest of the South in the Civil War.[20]

In contrast, Northerners believed that the free, middle class people of the Mid-Atlantic and Northern states, where the majority of the population preferred to settle, should set trade and industrial policy for the nation. A minority of plantation owners had no business setting policy for the majority.

Niles tried to find a middle ground by conceding that while Northern interests wanted to protect manufacturing systems, Southern interests would not be damaged. Once American goods were established in a home market, Niles argued, they would be just as cheap as imports had been before a tariff. One section's prosperity would not be a threat to another. Indeed, the South could prosper as easily as the North by building factories and roads and schools. If it chose not to change, then at least it should not hold back the rest of the country.[21]

Niles was particularly irked by the South's assumption that it held the moral high ground of a virtuous agrarian society. He frequently used examples of the

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[20] Paul K. Conkin, *The Southern Agrarians*, (Knoxville, Tenn: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), 85.

[21] Schmidt, 184.

social value of manufacturing that were typical of the early techno-utopian idealists. In one very early essay, Niles argued that the government should invest in manufacturing because it leaves men free for national defense.[22] Since most factory workers were women and children, Niles said later, they added value to the economy and did not divert labor from agriculture.[23] By the 1820s, Francis Lowell's social experiment at a Massachusetts textile mill added to the moral arguments for manufacturing. The mill owners contended that the work fostered discipline and moral management for young women by requiring them to do repetitive tasks.[24] Niles supported this view, commented that only a few years before, these young women had been "running through the woods nearly as wild and ignorant as Indians, with uncombed locks and clothing in rags."[25]

"Quieting Foreign Intrigues"

The War of 1812 had given "new direction to wealth and industry in the U.S., and manufacturers grew up as if by magic," Niles noted in 1816. In support of a proposed new tariff, he said: "We must creep before we can walk. Protect the manufacturers for the present, and in a little time, they will protect themselves and us." They had the potential, he said, of "releasing us from our dependence on foreigners and quieting their intrigues."[26]

It was the British who were most to blame for America's economic ills, Niles believed. A speech by British Member of Parliament Henry Brougham added some weight to Niles view. "It was well worth while to incur a loss upon the first exportation in order by the glut to stifle in the cradle those rising manufacturers in the U.S. which the war had forced into existence contrary to the usual course of things." In other words, the British were dumping goods in the express hope of ruining American businesses.[27]

By 1819, the British "dumping" which Brougham praised cost 150,000 American jobs and a total of $31 million, Niles calculated.[28] Even worse, American cloth was getting a bad reputation because the British had been sending "miserably bad" cloth to the market mislabeled as having been made in America.[29]

What Niles and other protectionists wanted was reciprocity, at least. They noted that while the door was open to free trade in cotton, British duties on wheat and other crops of the Mid-Atlantic and Ohio Valley effectively cut those areas off.[30]

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[22] *Register* 10:98, April 13, 1816.

[23] *Register* 15:296, Jan. 30, 1819.

[24] Marcus and Segal, 75.

[25] *Register* 34:313, July 12, 1828.

[26] *Register* 9:365, Jan. 27, 1816.

[27] *Register*, 9:283, Dec. 28, 1816.

[28] These kinds of calculations are one of the reasons why Niles is remembered more as an economist than a journalist. The *Register* not only printed statistics from others, but Niles himself kept close track of population and employment statistics through surveys and other primary sources.

[29] *Register*, 15:418, Jan. 30, 1819.

[30] *Register* 29:50, Oct. 24, 1825.

Another troubling development was the deepening British relationship with the South. He warned that the British "would encourage civil war" if given half a chance, and he reminded Southerners that one of the reasons South Carolina patriot William Drayton pushed for revolution in 1776 was the British laws forbidding some types of manufacturing in the colonies.[31]

Southerners disagreed with this interpretation of history, and saw the American Revolution as a victory over privilege and monopoly. An early resolution from the Fredericksburg (Va.) Agricultural Society (printed in the *Register*) laid out the points of opposition to tariffs. The resolution quoted Benjamin Franklin, who said that most regulation of trade was "by artful men for private advantage under the pretense of public good." It continued:

> The tariff is a tax "to be levied principally on the great body of agriculturalists who constitute a large majority of the American people and who are the chief consumers of foreign imports.... Instead of struggling against the dictates of reason and nature, and madly trying to produce everything at home, countries should study to direct their labors...[to things for which] they are best adapted.... *We* ask no tax on manufacturers for *our* benefit."[32]

Niles responded diplomatically: "If manufacturers are to be protected at the cost of agriculture, we say, let them remain unprotected. Our best affections are with the tillers of the soil. But believing it advantageous to all the agriculturalists in the U.S.... We must dissent from the opinions of those gentlemen of Virginia...."

In any event, the philosophy of agriculture itself was changing, becoming systematized and mechanized, Niles suggested in a separate editorial. "Men of virtue and talents...[were] bringing science to the aid [of agriculture] and introducing method and management to the dull monotony of a farmers life...."[33] This idea was well ahead of its time and is usually linked to mechanization of farm equipment in the 1830s and '40s.[34]

Niles used every occasion to make his point that tariffs would help the American economy. Paper makers, he noted in one editorial, could produce paper of the same price and quality as European, but with competition from cut-rate imports "there is a depressing effect of a small surplus on the price of the entire commodity."[35]

By 1820, Southerners were united in opposition to a new protective tariff bill, and Niles recorded the defeat of the 1820 tariff in the *Register.* He waited two months to write an editorial in which he noted that some of the rates may have been too high, and that perhaps a gradual approach would be wiser next time.[36] Privately, he was seething. "Your bill has indeed been butchered...," he wrote his

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[31] *Register*, 34: 249, 410, June 14 and Aug. 23, 1828.
[32] *Register*, 16:354, Jan. 22, 1820.
[33] *Register* 17:113, Oct. 23, 1819.
[34] Marcus & Segal, 115.
[35] *Register* 16:331, Jan. 15, 1820.
[36] *Register*, 28:241, June 3, 1820.

friend Congressman William Darlington. "I fear that I shall become disgusted."[37] A few days later he wrote Darlington again: "I begin to despair of the Republic and look to a thing which I always shrink from, as an event that cannot be avoided. The thought is dreadful." The "thing" to which he referred was civil war.

In the fall of 1820, the great political question was whether to admit Missouri as a slave state. Niles believed there was "no doubt as to the right of Congress to prohibit...slaves in the territories," but also said: "We would adhere to the bond of union at almost any sacrifice."[38] Niles eventually agreed that the Missouri compromise was necessary "for the unity of the Republic."[39] Again, privately, he expressed deep fears. A compromise over the Missouri affair would be necessary until the 1820 and 1830 census gave Northern states the ascendancy, he wrote. A recognition of the Missouri constitution would "compromise with both parties and avoid the coming storm."[40]

A year later, in a letter to his friend Philadelphia economist Mathew Carey, Niles was more pessimistic. "I am rather discouraged, but frightened not. The Southern influence rules, and that is hostile to free white labor. It is great in its means, indefatigable in its exertions and united. It must be put down, or in my honest opinion, the country will literally be beggared."[41]

Dialogue with the South: Thomas Ritchie

Congressional debates over the tariff and the Missouri compromise sparked an extensive public dialogue between Northern and Southern newspaper editors over issues which would be in play for the next half a century — infrastructure, equity, population distribution and representation, and most of all, slavery.

Editors applauded and denounced each other with the fervor of revivalists, thundering back and forth at each other through issues of their newspapers, issuing personal rejoinders as if they were writing private correspondence. The *Register* during this period was full of arguments between editors; Niles took pains to print both sides and keep the debate as amicable as possible.

Niles' dialogue with Thomas Ritchie, publisher of the Richmond *Enquirer*, was perhaps the most voluminous public correspondence, and the two editors loved to catch each other in contradictions. Niles also used the occasions to boost his ideas of alternatives for the South.

In June of 1820, Niles reprinted an article from the *Enquirer* where Ritchie evoked a theme frequently heard in the South today: "Let us alone," he said, congratulating Congress on stopping the tariff bill of 1820. "Government is at best a rude, unwieldy and bungling machine; it is an evil, although a necessary evil...." Niles responded that Ritchie's article "presents a beautiful contrast with the facts." He said the tariff would not hurt the South, and claimed that U.S. manufacturers made less money than it cost to keep the U.S. fleet in the Medi-

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[37] Niles to Darlington, William Darling MSS, Library of Congress, May 5, 1820.
[38] *Register*, 17:362, Jan. 29, 1820.
[39] *Register*, 19:145, Nov. 4, 1820.
[40] Niles to Darlington, Darlington MSS, Library of Congress, Nov. 20, 1820.
[41] Niles to Carey, Dec. 11, 1821; cited in Schmidt, 144.

terranean.[42]

In November of the same year, Niles and Ritchie accused each other of flogging the dead issue of the Missouri compromise. Niles once again warned against civil war: "Shall we open the door to what may become the foulest proscription: state against state?"[43]

Niles and Ritchie also exchanged polite barbs over internal improvements. "It is our (Virginia's) public works that Mr. Niles sees to be most at fault. He asks, where are our schools, our canals, etc.? He seems to be ignorant that...we have solid funds appropriated for these purposes." Niles responded with hard facts: Maryland, with a fraction of the population, spent $25 million for schools in 1820, while Virginia spent only $45 million. "Virginia might rightfully aspire to lead in whatever improves a country or benefits a free people," Niles said, adding that Virginia of all states had his "first love." But Virginia's slide from preeminence, he said, was "from the errors of her legislation."[44]

After Congress passed the tariff of 1824, a Ritchie editorial said that the law plundered planters for the benefit of manufacturers. Niles challenged Ritchie to name one article whose price had gone up because of the tariff. He noted that other predicted impacts had not taken place: revenues to the government had not gone down, and trade had not diminished, because of the tariff.

At one point, Ritchie asked, why not build factories in the South and take advantage of the new tariff? Exactly, Niles encouraged. "Establish factories [in the South] and enjoy [their] bounties."[45] When a large cotton mill was built in Petersburg, Va. in 1827, Niles' delivered a strong warning about civil war veiled in thick rhetoric:

> [Projects like the cotton mill] speak a language to our Southern brethren that would put down many declamations against the tariff in causing people to see what that law has produced, and not permit their reason to be led captive by political aspirants or persons rendered unwise because of apprehended loss of power, by which they weaken themselves and hasten that which they so much fear.[46]

Niles also enjoyed using pointed humor. When the *Enquirer* reported copper, tin and zinc mines discovered in western Virginia, he said: "Though they may be worked to great advantage, will it not be better that we should receive all such articles from abroad lest the possessors of the mines may become 'monopolists' and the people... turned into manufacturers?"[47]

In the same issue, he went directly to the point: "Virginia was at the head of

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[42] *Register*, 18:297, June 24, 1820.

[43] *Register* 19:145, Nov. 4, 1820.

[44] *Register* 21:228, Dec. 8, 1821.

[45] *Register* 29:193, December, 1925. Stanwood said that Niles' pleasure at a proposal to build factories in the South is "quite compatible" with his wish that the factories already erected should be put beyond reach of injurious foreign competition. "It is not compatible with the motive usually imputed to protectionists by free traders, assumed to be purely desire to increase profits manufacturers." One premise of this paper, that Niles' outlook had a public interest rationale, is thus in accord with an early historian of tariffs. (Stanwood, 252).

[46] *Register*, 30:417, Aug. 25, 1827.

[47] *Register*, 29:3, Sept. 3, 1825.

this [U.S.] confederacy," Niles said, "and if her natural advantages had been improved, and if she had encouraged free labor...she might still have held, if not the first, perhaps the second rank among states. And she will yet have to give way to other new states if her essay makers [meaning Ritchie]...shall cause a perseverance in her present system of policies."

"The system is supported," Niles said in a memorable barb, "with something of the sort of feeling which leads a man to hold on to a bottle."[48]

Slavery and a lack of internal improvements had indeed been a root cause of trouble for Virginia, according to an anonymous *Enquirer* article some years earlier reprinted in the *Register*. In "The Effects of Slavery," the author admitted that slavery was "unfavorable to [Virginia's] speedy advancement in those political and internal improvements which have elevated some of our Northern states to a pitch of enviable eminence. There can be no doubt that slavery, that inert mass of our population, is the one great cause of all our misfortunes.... Slavery, even in its mildest forms, is a kind of civil warfare." The anonymous author, possibly Ritchie, suggested setting a firm date for emancipation which could be as distant as January 1, 2000.[49]

In May of 1826, Niles winged another good-humored barb at Ritchie. Under the headline of "Terrible Crisis," he noted that a ship's cargo of American made cloth was being exported to Mexico. "On account of the 'abominable tariff,' we furnish coarse cotton goods far cheaper than the British.... As my friend from the Richmond *Enquirer* has not found a crisis for the last two months...he will no doubt feel obliged."[50]

Dialogue with the South: Other Editors

Niles kept tabs on many other Southern publications and frequently reprinted minor but telling items in his efforts to keep track of "the coming storm." For example, he noted without comment the South Carolina legislature's resolution on the tariff bill of 1820: The bill, said the legislature, was "a wretched expedient to repair the losses in some commercial districts [caused by] speculation...and to make the most important interests of the country subservient to the most inconsiderable."[51]

When Georgians wanted some of Florida's territory in 1821, Niles reprinted an item from the *Georgia Chronicle* warning against it because "In the present struggle for sectional preponderance" every bit of influence is needed, and Florida could provide two more senate seats for the South.[52]

The same week Niles even took note of a toast, made at a private party in Charleston, to "the firm union of the South." Hinting at treason, he said any good citizen would have turned his glass upside down as surely as if a toast to "the nation of New England" had been proposed.[53]

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[48] *Register*, 29:50, Oct. 24, 1825.
[49] *Register*, 21:28, Sept., 1821.
[50] *Register*, 30:201, May 20, 1826.
[51] *Register*, 19:346, Jan. 20, 1821.
[52] *Register*, 21:392, Feb. 16, 1822.
[53] Ibid.

Niles followed events in Charleston closely, and when the *Charleston Patriot* noted that a canal from Charleston to Columbia, S.C. would "make [the town] a place of commercial importance equal to New York," Niles added the comment that he "was not prepared to admit the reasonableness of this speculation...[but] We are glad to see the effect of internal improvement anywhere and everywhere."[54]

Niles also took note that a *Patriot* letter writer worried about a decline in the population of South Carolina and advocated canal building. "We must be aware that not only our political existence, but also our individual existence, and certainly all the prosperity in the lower part of the state depends on equaling or surpassing if possible the exertions now made in the Northern and Middle states.... We were fully awakened to the dangers [by the] Missouri question, and it is our duty to ourselves and our future posterity to exert all our energy to ward off such a state of things." Niles comment was simple: "The dearest interests [of the Southern states] are involved in the adoption of measures for the support and encouragement of free laboring whites."[55]

In another revealing exchange, Niles tried to show how both sides could rise above partisanship. A "distinguished gentleman from Charleston," wrote Niles to disagree on the need for a tariff but conceded that the nation might have an interest in establishing some particular types of manufacturing. Niles said he and the writer were "in perfect accord," and that proponents of protection "do not require any sacrifices." Niles also pointed to the tariff on sugar. "Look at this seriously," he asked. Louisiana, with very little population, with one crop raised by only a few individuals, got tariff protection to the tune of $1.2 million a year. "The wildest enthusiasts in support of manufacturing never dreamed of such a high degree of protection," he said. He supported the sugar tariff — not as a way to protect planters, but rather "as a means of advancing the prosperity of the United States."[56]

One only has to open a copy of the *Register* to find examples of Niles' conciliatory and moderate tone on the tariff question in the 1820 - 1828 period. Northern states seek a home market, Niles said, while Southern states have a foreign one. "But a home market for the former will not in the least degree affect the foreign demand for the product of the latter."

In another conciliatory statement, he said: "I do not wish to press this subject to its full extent, and I pray to Heaven there may never be a necessity for it, for I would that the United States should be preserved."[57]

Niles persisted despite increasing cancellations of Southern subscriptions. He wrote Darlington: "There is a violent getting up about that matter that rivals days long past & which I hoped would never return."[58]

He also wrote to Gideon Welles on Dec. 3, 1827, that his thoughts "will give fresh vigor to persecution from the South that is seemingly not willing to stop

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[54] *Register*, 21:244, Dec. 15, 1821.

[55] Ibid. Note that canals were considered the most important internal improvements at the time; railroads were not feasible until the mid-1830s.

[56] Note that sugar tariffs and price guarantees are still among the most expensive items on the federal farm budget.

[57] *Register* 23:339, Feb. 1, 1823.

[58] Niles to Darlington, Darlington MSS, Library of Congress, March 31, 1828.

short of extermination.... I will not make any compromise...."[59]

The Balance of Conscience: Moderation and Slavery

As a Quaker, Hezekiah Niles grew up hating slavery. Luxon notes that Niles had been a member of an abolitionist society in 1803, but had not maintained his membership.[60] Even so, throughout his life he was repulsed by the "peculiar institution." In a private letter Jan., 1820 to Congressman Darlington Niles said that the Missouri issue was that of the "white freeman" versus the "slave holder.... Perhaps a safe compromise may be affected. Yet tis bad to compromise with him."[61] And in 1830, Niles privately wrote that the conflict between North and South "is the battle of Americans against the holders of slaves."[62]

Despite his private feelings, his *Register* editorials recognized the danger of extremism. "Slavery is more easily reasoned against than removed, however sincerely and honestly desired," he wrote in 1816.[63] He frequently confessed to his readers his own dilemma reconciling the rights and safety of the master and the slave. In one series of articles, he proposed a three-point plan of gradual emancipation, movement to the North, and checks on the African-American population.[64]

Niles believed that new thinking would have to be applied to the problem. Economics and population growth statistics showed that moving freed slaves to colonies in Liberia and the Caribbean could not be the answer. He tried to be a model of compromise and conciliation.

"If it can be shown that it is in the interest of the master to treat his slave kindly and bring his mind to act as well as his person, those unfortunate beings may be prepared for a much better period than they are in now, though the period of their entire emancipation may be very distant," he wrote.[65] This kind of program contrasted radically with the abolitionist call for immediate and total emancipation, and Niles was denounced by abolitionists.

Niles used several tactics to placate Southerners and draw them into his perspective. One tactic was a diversionary focus to the related issue of the slave trade. Every volume of the *Register* between 1817 and 1835 contains dozens of factual items on the horrors of the slave trade, but almost none of the stories involved ill treatment of American slaves at the hands of their owners, despite the abundance of such news material.

"There is an immense difference between those who hold slaves, and such as [those who] introduce them from Africa," he said. In a footnote, Niles said he made this remark "because I have seen some observations on this subject which I consider as exceedingly ungenerous and unjust — calculated to do harm rather

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[59] Schmidt, 197.
[60] Luxon, 264.
[61] Niles to Darlington, Darlington MSS, Library of Congress, Jan. 21, 1820.
[62] Niles to Darlington, Darlington MSS, Library of Congress, Sept. 10, 1830.
[63] Register 11:86, Dec. 21, 1816.
[64] *Register* 13:164, Nov. 8, 1817.
[65] *Register*, 15:477, Feb. 20, 1819.

than to answer any good purpose to the cause of emancipation."[66]

Of the horrors of the slave trade, one typical example among hundreds given was that of a British ship which captured a slave trader off the coast of Africa. In the hold the British found 34 women in a box nine feet long, five feet wide and three feet high and 37 men in a hold only slightly bigger. Each had only about four cubic feet of space.[67]

Items abounded in the *Register* on the widespread sickness, high death rates and even the deliberate drowning of sick and injured slaves before ships reached market.[68] The *Register* also carried stories about the cruelty and butchery going on in Africa, such as one tale from Botswana of the killing of thousands of villagers so their children could be taken to the slave ships.[69]

Another illustration of the horror of the slave trade was an item under the headline: "Liberation!"

> A miserable black man, brought from one of the lower counties of Maryland to Baltimore and sold to a dealer in human flesh for transportation, cut his own throat and died at the moment he was to be delivered over to the blood merchant, through his agent, a *peace officer!* (Italics as printed). [70]

Niles once castigated the *Telescope* of Columbia, S.C. for its defense of the slave trade. "Everyone who was believed to traffic in a certain biped lately gone so much in request in the South has seemingly gone to the d---l [sic] even in this world, before his time."

And yet, typical of Niles' reticence in offending moderate Southerners, harsh items about domestic slavery were not common in the 1820s. For example, Niles printed an item on the Charleston city council's decision to enforce laws against teaching slaves to read without any comment.[71] He also noted slaves escaping from Louisiana to Texas (then part of Mexico) were "fortunately captured."[72]

An important test of Niles' diplomacy and a strain on his sense of fairness involved the Denmark Vessey plot, which rocked Charleston in the summer of 1822 (and is remembered there to this day.) In early dispatches, Niles reported three factual items concerning the discovery of a plot and the hanging of six black conspirators. A few weeks later, in September, Niles ran without comment a full statement on the plot from the governor of South Carolina as well as a speech by the judge sentencing "Gullah Jack," one of Vessey's alleged conspirators. "All the powers of darkness cannot rescue you from your coming fate," the judge told Gullah Jack. Of Denmark Vessey, the governor said: "His artful and insidious delusions were kept in perpetual exercise.... Seditious pamphlets [and] speeches of oppositionists in Congress gave serious and imposing effect to his

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[66] *Register*, 10:334, July 13, 1816.
[67] *Register*, 20:48, March 17, April 21, 1821.
[68] See Luxon, 265.
[69] *Register*, 24:322, July 1823.
[70] *Register*, 20:192, May 19, 1821.
[71] *Register*, 20: 108, April 21, 1821.
[72] *Register*, 23:96, Oct. 19, 1822.

machinations."[73]

A week later, Niles disclosed his own carefully measured views in editorial: "Unpleasant as the fact may appear, we must admit that slaves have a natural right to obtain their liberty if they can." He compared the plight of the slaves to American heroes of Tripoli who, had they been able to acquire their liberty even "by conflagration of the city and slaughter of every one who opposed them...we would say they had covered themselves in glory." While Niles could not approve of the violence apparently plotted by the slaves, neither could he approve of the violence inherent in the system of slavery.[74]

In order to help people envision the positive side of liberation for slaves, Niles frequently used a diverting tactic of referring to emancipation in Latin America: "One great good will at least grow out of the revolutions in Mexico and Columbia, for slavery is abolished in all of them, and, after a few years, the road to honor and respectability and wealth being open to all, distinctions on account of color will be lost, and the whole mass of society will have a common interest and feeling."[75]

The diversion to related issues and the appearance of moderation were attempts to preserve a margin of credibility among Southern moderates. One reason Niles was reluctant to publish his own ideas was his increasing fear of British interference.

Originally, in 1818, Niles said the world should be grateful for the way Britain had moved against the slave trade, whatever the motives. But after the Missouri debates, when he realized the possibility of civil war in America, Niles warned that Britain had ulterior motives. "It is not in the character of that government to spare human life or lessen human miser," he wrote. The real reason they suppressed the slave trade was to maintain the sugar plantation monopoly in the West Indies.[76]

A year later, he said of British efforts against slavery: "All this is as nothing. The British have 120 millions of slaves in Asia alone. White, brown, or black — all is the same to them, if profit is made by the proceeding.... I believe the whole secret [of stopping] the African slave trade was a regard for the price of sugar and the support of the West India colonies, well stocked with this miserable class [of slaves]."[77]

Niles maintained some hope of persuading the South to change its peculiar system. For example, in 1828, he noted that slave labor was being used in cotton manufacturing plants in Georgia and South Carolina, and manufacturing was "as profitable in the South [as] the North." He observed: "If individuals and enterprises are properly directed in new establishments, they will greatly tend to do away with the prejudice of the South, let the motives which prompted their erection be what they may."[78]

He also hoped the South would realize how great an albatross slavery had be-

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[73] *Register*, 23:22, Sept. 7, 1822.
[74] *Register*, 22:20, Sept. 14, 1822.
[75] *Register* 43:81, Oct. 12 1822.
[76] *Register*, 21:82, Oct. 6, 1821.
[77] *Register* 23:53, Sept. 28, 1822.
[78] *Register*, 34:379, Aug. 9, 1828.

come:

> The checks to population in the slave states are more severe than any which [Rev. Thomas] Malthus thought of. Free white labor is not honored. The education of the poor is neglected. A desire to excel is not stimulated. Manufacturing establishments are not encouraged. The mechanical class is degraded. And internal improvements is — "Let Alone." *[A reference to Ritchie's plea to be "let alone," noted above].* Hence the productive classes, the bone and the sinew of every country, have but a small rate of increase. They reject labor by the side of slaves, and seek new homes where the owner of the soil also guides a plough, or holds a spade.[79]

Niles and the "Tariff of Abominations"

By 1828, divisive sectional issues came to a head around the tariff debate. Middle Atlantic and Western protectionists, including Niles, insisted on strengthening the 1824 tariff (which already imposed 20 to 25 percent duties) arguing that even higher duties on foreign imports would complete the nation's independence from Britain and allow young industries to grow. The South saw no reason to distance itself from Britain, which remained its major export market and source of imports. Southerners argued that a strong tariff would be a direct tax on the South.[80] The bill that passed in May, 1828 raised tariffs to an average of 45 percent, and was labeled by Southerners the "tariff of abominations."

An important feature of the crisis, in one economic historian's view, was the outpouring of literature on protectionism, especially by Niles and his friend Mathew Carey, who were "leaders in a propaganda unlike any other in our history." According to the historian Edward Stanwood, "Free traders did not begin their 'campaign of education' until it was too late to prevent tariff of 1828.... [Free trade papers] had no more than local influence. Even the *National Intelligencer* and the *New York Evening Post* had far less power than *Niles Weekly Register* and Carey's pamphlets."[81]

Niles continued to be diplomatic in the *Register* while privately seething with anxiety. For example, the main thrust of an editorial just before the tariff passed was that the South was intent on protecting slave labor while ignoring the needs of free laborers in the North.[82] But as he wrote to Congressman Darlington, their opponents were "dirty men [with] dirty deeds to fulfill the bargain.... I am almost getting out of patience with human nature — but must take my part in one other battle. The American System depends on its issue, and my anxiety is almost intolerable."[83]

Niles played a role beyond that of an editor in lobbying for the "tariff of abominations." He wrote to Sen. Henry Clay that circumstances "have made me a prominent man in this matter, and I shall have to take a large share in the bat-

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[79] *Register*, 35:333, January, 1829.

[80] Also see Stanwood, 261.

[81] Stanwood, 249.

[82] *Register* 34:97, April 5, 1828.

[83] Niles to Darlington, Darlington MSS, Library of Congress, March 31, 1828.

tle that is to be fought. It is expected of me— and I cannot disappoint my friends."[84] Historian Phillip Schmidt believes this shows Niles deriving "a great deal of ego gratification" and that he overrated his own influence.[85] But this does not take into account Stanwood's view of the unprecedented nature of Niles' propaganda campaign, or the fact that Niles prominently participated in a variety of industry committees aimed at promoting protection that did expect him to fulfill his promise to be very much involved, or the possibility that as an editor he may have been reluctant to take on the role of lobbyist.

One of the abiding controversies surrounding the "tariff of abominations," and an insight into Niles' vantage point as Congressional observer, involves the cloakroom politics behind the bill. Niles said he was "pretty familiar with what might be called the private history" of the tariff bill, and had "no hesitation in saying that its passage was owing to the acts of some who had resolved to defeat the entire project."[86] As he saw it, Southerners in Congress had stumbled into a legislative trap of their own design; they had created a bill in committee which they thought would be unacceptable to New England and all but the most ardent protectionists. But the bill "unexpectedly" passed.[87] "They became entangled in the meshes of their own nets. May such ever be the fate of left handed legislation."[88]

Two other versions of the machinations behind the passage of the "tariff of abominations" are given credit by historians. In one, Northern Democrats who crafted the bill also did not expect it to succeed, since it was so strong that it would not be acceptable to New Englanders. When the bill was defeated, Democrats could hold the anti-tariff South in their camp and, at the same time, win the pro-tariff West by making it appear that they had at least tried.[89]

According to a second version, Northern Democrats intended all along that the bill should pass, since that was the only way to bring the protectionist votes of the Middle Atlantic from the "Whig" camp of Henry Clay into the Democratic camp of Andrew Jackson. Passing the tariff bill helped Jackson win the presidency that fall of 1828.[90] In support of this view, it is noted that the South would not have opposed Jackson, a slave-owner from Tennessee, under any circumstances. And while Southerners had seniority on the key Congressional committee and helped write the bill, Northern factions held the majority of committee votes.

The latter two views seem to have the benefit of historical hindsight. Yet Niles' view has something of the ring of truth to it in that accidental developments and "left handed legislation," as often as grand designs, may help explain Congressional activity.

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[84] Niles to Clay, Henry Clay MSS, Library of Congress, April 2, 1828.
[85] Schmidt, 202.
[86] *Register*, 34:265, June 21, 1828.
[87] *Register* 34:135, May 17, 1828.
[88] *Register*, 34:265, June 21, 1828.
[89] Schmidt, 203.
[90] Robert V. Rimini, *Martin Van Buren and the Making of the Democratic Party* (NY: 1959).

Southern Reaction to the 1828 Tariff

When word reached Charleston that President John Quincy Adams signed the "tariff of abominations" in May 1828, ships in Charleston harbor lowered their flags to half-mast. Niles could not fail to note that British warships were among them.[91]

Bitter Southern reaction to the new tariff took the form of mass meetings, legislative resolutions and newspaper articles throughout the summer of 1828. Niles kept track of it all, and said Southern papers were beginning "to abound with articles of a violent cast."[92]

Most alarming was an editorial in the *Charleston Courier*: "Fear nothing," it said. "Foreign nations will protect us. We have commerce and production to tempt them and they have men and ships to defend us. Congress can do nothing but blockade us, and that may soon be obviated."[93] Niles said: "It would seem that nothing will satisfy the wild politicians of that country (the South) but an abandonment of principles which have prevailed since the Constitution was adopted."[94]

In the same issue Niles reprinted a *Georgia Journal* editorial calling the tariff "an abominable scheme of legalized plunder.. We love this union...and nothing but your unkindnesses and injustices can drive us out of it." He also reprinted an item from the *Southron* of Georgia (which Niles called a "detestable badge of slavery and degradation") which trumpeted "resistance to the very bounds of the Constitution."

Niles noted that the Columbia, S.C., *Telegraph* said "if other states can exclude slaves we can exclude their products," and that the "object of every agriculturalist should be in the first place to devise a means for the destruction of the manufacturing mania."

Searching for moderate voices, Niles noted a *Georgia Statesman* editorial reminding Southerners that the 8th Article of the Constitution specifically gives Congress the power to lay and collect taxes, duties and imposts and to regulate commerce with foreign nations. "With these provisions of the great charter staring them in the face, how dare the editors of the *Southron*?" asked the *Statesman.*[95] Niles noted a Greenville, S.C., newspaper's editorial expressing fears that the "fire eaters" (as secessionists were then called) had the "worst of purposes — to bring on a conflict with the general government that certain men may rise in the storm of civil commotion."[96]

In the hope of encouraging moderation, Niles wrote: "There are enough solid thinking men in South Carolina to allay [the excitement].... The ills prophesized of the tariff of 1824 yet remain visions of nightmare-ridden men." Predicting that only real economic pressures would precipitate a true crisis, he said: "They will *feel* some of the oppression talked of before they will...produce a civil war," he

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[91] *Register*, 34:249, June 14, 1828. Interestingly, Charleston newspapers were not entirely happy with the British that day; the Charleston *Gazette* said it was "an insult" to the U.S.

[92] *Register*, 34:300, July 5, 1828.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid.

[96] *Register*, 34:353, July 26, 1828.

said, predicting that the effect of the tariff would not be felt.[97]

Opinion took an ironic turn, Niles observed, in that Southern leaders were encouraging citizens to wear homespun clothing and not to submit to the unjust burden of the new tariff. Various newspapers, such as the Yorkville, S.C., paper, noted that "many parts [of the South] are well calculated for manufacturing purposes; why not avail ourselves of these advantages?"[98] Similarly, the Pendleton, S.C., *Messenger* advocated manufacturing as many of the taxed items as possible.[99] The Macon, Ga., *Telegraph* opined that if instead of "violent and useless ranting against the tariff...we were to set to work actively manufacturing our own articles...we would more effectively shield [ourselves] against the ill effects [of the tariff] than all the newspaper rant and seditious resolutions that would fill the most ponderous folio."[100]

One paper, the Georgia *Journal*, warned that if investments were made in manufacturing, and if the tariff were to be repealed, "where would Southern manufacturers find themselves?" Niles responded this was exactly the situation faced by manufacturers following the embargo and non-intercourse acts of 1809-1815 — and the reason for tariff legislation in the first place.[101]

Perhaps one of the most memorable articles reprinted during this debate was from former South Carolina Governor Williams. "Is there a citizen in this state who will prefer to take his musket and shoot down 23 yankees (and the destruction of life must be in that proportion, or it will go against us) rather than make his own coarse woolen cloth?"[102]

Niles was encouraged by this moderation, and noted that there was "good sense enough in the South to compel agitators to feel their own insignificance."[103] But he also attempted to draw the line for the South. His editorial of August 16, 1828, stands out as a model of eloquence and dignity: "There is a Holiness about the Constitution; and we would...wither every hand extended to treat it rudely. The peace and prosperity of this Republic, the world's last best hope, must not be haphazarded, much less destroyed, that certain men may rule."[104]

In response to his conciliatory and principled views, Niles received many "coarsely written" anonymous crank letters, some of them coming with postage due.[105] He also said he was frequently burned, hung and tarred and feathered in effigy.[106] And he noted several times that he lost many Southern subscribers because of his stand on tariff and nullification. "In South Carolina and Georgia a spirit of persecution seems to have been raised against us," he wrote in 1829. "We have been denounced as 'enemies of the South' and our patronage is one-third of what it was prior" to the tariff controversy. But, Niles said, many new

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[97] *Register*, 34:328, July 19, 1828.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., 34:340.
[100] *Register*, 35:20, Sept. 6, 1828.
[101] *Register* 34:410, Aug. 23, 1828.
[102] Parenthesis from Gov. Williams, as printed, *Register* 35:34, Sept. 13, 1828.
[103] *Register* 34:416, Aug. 23, 1828.
[104] *Register* 34:393, Aug. 16, 1828.
[105] *Register* 43:2, Sept. 1, 1832.
[106] Luxon, 1947, 63; see also *Register* 47:409, Feb. 14, 1835.

subscribers in Virginia and North Carolina offset losses in the deep South.[107]

A toast at a South Carolina banquet hailed "Hezekiah Niles and Mathew Carey—the big orang-outang and baboon of the 'monkey system.' We blush for our humanity when they dictate to 12 millions of freemen." Such barbs sometimes made Niles lose his sense of diplomacy; the man who gave the toast, Niles said, should "deduct from his 12 millions two millions of black...slaves, including any of his own children, if subjected to the lash of his own negro driver...."[108]

Niles' attitude was hardening, although he reserved his severest comments for his correspondence. Niles wrote a friend in August 1830: "I will offer up no sacrifices to appease the devils of that state — I will not build an altar to Fear.... I would grapple them as I would a nettle— firmly; neither trifle with nor coax them. Give way—and the masters of the negroes are ours also." In the same letter, Niles showed how extensively and consciously he had been tailoring his comments on divisive sectional issues in order to encourage moderation. "All that we can write has no effect on them," Niles said. "I will *write for others,* that they may see the baseness of the would-be traitors." (emphasis added).[109] Here Niles explicitly stated the pragmatic approach underlying his editorial policies which he felt, at that point, he might as well abandon.

Around this time, Niles' friendly competition with Ritchie of the Richmond *Enquirer* also turned sour, as Ritchie accused Niles of seeking personal glory and money by distributing tariff literature.[110]

Niles' interest in economics was far more academic than personal. In fact, more historians have focused on his economic abilities than his editorial talents. His interest in economics grew with age, and after 1830, he began casting many questions in more modern economic terms. In an 1830 essay on the "Circulation of Values," he analyzed differences between Northern and Southern economies. As he saw it, the major difference was that free labor was encouraged in North, and as a result, a diversified home market economy existed where money turned over many times each year. The economy was dynamic. In contrast, the South had no home market, depended on foreign markets, and capital turned over only once per year at harvest. Thus, the planter class would eventually face economic dissolution.[111]

During this time, it is important to note, Niles was as widely celebrated in the North as he was reviled in the South. He was an honored speaker at many banquets in Philadelphia, New York and Wilmington, and served on several important commissions with industrialists such as E.I DuPont and Charles J. Ingersoll.[112] Virginia may have had his "first love" in the 1820s, but the Baltimore editor's orientation was increasingly toward the North by the 1830s.

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[107] *Register* 39:65, also page 209, Sept. 26, 1829.
[108] *Register*, 37:398, July 31, 1830.
[109] Schmidt, 206.
[110] *Register*, 37:65, March 1830; see also Stone, 74.
[111] *Register*, 39: 233, Dec. 4,1830.
[112] Schmidt, 181.

"The Union is Now Dissolved"

As enmity increased, Niles abandoned editorial restraint and began filling the *Register* with endless arguments and debates in favor of retaining and expanding the 1828 "tariff of abominations." In a typically flamboyant editorial, he wrote: "The glorious flag of the American System which mantles the comforts of the industrious poor and cheers the working man...shall never be struck...."[113]

His bitterness is evident in a comment on what he saw as the lack of Southern flexibility. Niles said if the South had honestly sought adjustment there would be no problem:

> But the "gods" demanded that the principle should be abandoned — the few said to the many, YOU SHALL. Bah! The "shall" will be found on the other side, when nullification reaches the fullness of its time, and foreign aid is obtained by presumptuous traitors.... The wishes of the minority should be respected, but the majority must rule. Aye, KING NUMBERS rather than KING GEORGE.... Let them rebel, then — and let rebellion have its perfect work, if so they will have it. LET NULLIFICATION BECOME COMPLETE IN NULLIFYING ITSELF.[114]

In 1832, Congress eased the extremely high tariff rates of 1828, but the compromise did not satisfy Southerners. Shortly after Andrew Jackson won reelection in 1832, the South Carolina legislature passed a nullification law, declaring that customs would not collect tariff duties in the ports there. Niles wrote: "We have only a poor opinion of that man's intellect who believes that the excitement in [South Carolina] really prevails because of the oppressions of the tariff law. It has grown out of other causes, which dare not yet be avowed."[115]

On December 10, Jackson warned that he would see that laws were obeyed, and if South Carolinians pursued that course they would be guilty of treason. Niles published his proclamation and commended it. "As we said in a former dark period of our history, we say now — Live the Constitution."[116]

Two weeks later he said the question was whether the union would be preserved or whether we should "let it be given up, with a frank but debasing confession, that the people are not capable of self-government, but must have emperors and kings, established priesthoods and large standing armies, to preserve them from themselves."[117]

But the "nullification crisis" continued to mount. On the pages of the *Register*, debate over a new bill accommodating to Southern demands boiled for next two months. "It is impossible that...the value of the labor of a free white citizen of the U.S. shall be regulated by that of a black slave at home or a white slave

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[113] *Register* 41:412, Feb. 4, 1832.
[114] *Register* 42:321, June 30, 1832.
[115] *Register* 43:168, November 1832.
[116] *Register* 43, 249, Dec. 15, 1832.
[117] *Register* 43:285, Dec. 29, 1832.

abroad."[118]

The crisis was resolved when John C. Calhoun and Henry Clay worked out a compromise tariff bill. All protective tariffs over 20 percent were to be gradually reduced until 1842, then reduced to a flat 20 percent rate. Niles was stunned. "It may be that our favorite systems are all to be destroyed. If so the majority determines, so be it."[119]

The compromise was deeply distressing to Niles, as it represented the victory of a small number of Southerners over the large number of Northerners. Even worse, it represented victory through the threat of nullification and secession. "If its practice is sustained, the union is now dissolved. It has no more adhesion than...a shovelfull of sand."[120]

Niles as a Forerunner of the "New South"

When a Southern editor called Niles "the great enemy of the South" in 1827, Niles responded that did not think he would be remembered that way once Southerners realized that their own interests, as well as those of the North, were served by the American System.[121] Historian Phillip Schmidt commented this must have been "either naive, founded on wishful thinking, or both."[122]

Schmidt's opinion might be re-examined in light of the fact that, 60 years later, Southerners did support the ideas of the American System (without remembering Niles) when they rallied to Atlanta *Constitution* editor Henry Grady's call for a "New South."

The American System which Niles advocated for both North and South was a philosophy of economic development favored by the Whig party (which by the 1850s would evolve into the Republican party). The philosophy called for: 1) diversified scientific agriculture; 2) high tariff protection for emerging manufacturers; 3) state and federal funding of public works projects such as roads and canals (called "internal improvements"); and 4) universal public education and other incentives for a strong middle class. Niles' allies included economist Matthew Carey and Kentucky Sen. Henry Clay.

Niles believed that war could be avoided if the South would gradually move away from its slave owning plantation economy towards a Southern version of the American System. This would preserve the Union by decreasing decrease economic and political tensions between sections of the country.

It is perhaps more than an interesting coincidence that Niles' ideas foreshadowed Grady's post Civil War concepts about the "New South." In speeches during the 1880s, Grady found national acclaim in his call for a South with diversified agriculture,[123] tariff protection for manufacturing,[124] public works proj-

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[118] *Register* 43:371, Feb. 2. 1833.

[119] *Register*, 43:401, Feb. 16, 1832.

[120] *Register* 44:113, April 30 1833.

[121] *Register*, 32:49, March 27, 1827.

[122] Schmidt, 189.

[123] Harold Davis, *Henry Grady's New South*, (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1990), 111.

[124] Ibid., 114.

ects[125] and universal public education.[126] There is no direct evidence that Grady found inspiration for his ideas in *Niles Register,* according to Grady biographer Harold Davis.[127] Yet because the Register was bound and preserved in book form in many libraries (unlike most newspapers of the era), it is likely that Grady would have had a chance to read it. On the other hand, it is perfectly feasible that Grady re-developed the same ideas simply because they represented an obvious alternative for the South's old economic system.

Grady's support for protective tariffs is interesting in that it ran directly counter to the prevailing philosophy of fellow Southern Democrats at the time. "Grady and the [Atlanta] *Constitution* were vocal supporters of industry, wanting the South industrialized to balance the economy," Davis wrote. "To them the tariff would help the process.... [Yet] their argument was nearly a Republican one."[128] It is also interesting (if coincidental) that the *Constitution* supported Liberal Republican Horace Greeley in the 1872 election, before Grady joined the staff. Greeley, it should be recalled, was a former Whig who adopted much of his philosophy from Hezekiah Niles.[129]

Eventually, a manufacturing, public-works oriented South would rise, despite protests of the Southern agrarians,[130] and despite the loss of agrarian culture.[131] That Niles had seen the alternative so many years before the war is evidence of his powers of insight.

Conclusion

Hezekiah Niles clearly predicted civil war forty years before it occurred. He argued that it might be avoided if the South would change from a plantation system to a more diversified economy. As noted above, Niles foreshadowed Henry Grady's "New South" concept, which also urged diversified agriculture, tariff protection for manufacturing, universal education and public works.

For all his insight, Niles also had several blind spots. In continuing to advocate high tariffs in the 1830s, he underestimated the power of a growing American industry. He believed that the historical lesson of the 1809-1816 manufacturing boom, and the subsequent post-war depression, proved the need for high tariffs. But by the mid to late 1830s, cheap resources, immigration and the power of invention allowed American industry to rise without heavy tariffs. "Incredibly, the newborn United States was more successful than any other nation in assuming the attitude of mind required...to take over the most advanced technology in the world," wrote Brooke Hindle.[132] The "American System" had already taken hold, and would remain a folk icon and cultural fixation for at least another cen-

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[125] Ibid., 164 and 181.

[126] Ibid., 139.

[127] Personal communication, Harold Davis, 1990.

[128] Davis, *Henry Grady's New South,* 114.

[129] Ida Tarbell, *Tariff in Our Times.* Note that Greeley was running against former Union General Ulyssis Grant, who was not an acceptable candidate from the Southern viewpoint.

[130] Paul K. Conkin, *The Southern Agrarians,* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988).

[131] See Wendell Barry, *The Gift of Good Land,* (Berkeley: North Point Press, 1981).

[132] Brooke Hindle, *Emulation & Invention* (New York: Norton & Co., 1981), 3.

tury. Henry Ford, for example, would invoke the idea as late as 1936.[133]

Essentially, Niles misjudged America's ability to surpass European industries. The ideas he expressed were far more successful than he realized, but they were part of a cultural development that did not always emerge, or need to emerge, on the political level. This is a familiar pattern. Barbara Tuchman once noted, for example, that history has a way of failing to fulfill the expectations of those who think they have learned its lessons.[134]

Another misreading of historical lessons involves Niles' complete distrust of the British, which stemmed from his revolutionary heritage. He was aware that Southerners were counting on "idle British warships" in the 1830s. Yet he did not imagine that, in a few decades, the labor movement in Britain would make it politically impossible for the British to enter an American civil war on behalf of the South. Others such as Henry Clay were willing to buy time for the North in the 1830s, and in retrospect, the tariff compromise was a small chip in the much larger political game.

By 1832, Niles was clinging to the American System with the same inflexibility he disliked in Southerners. His conciliatory tone changed markedly, and his support for protective tariffs took on a proselytizing character. When he could not write "for" Southerners and have an impact, he decided "to write for others" and expose the "would-be traitors." Niles became so embittered that he eventually advocated military force to crush the nullification movement of 1832 — a ploy that might have sparked the civil war that he had worked to avoid.

Many histories of Niles' era discount the motives of tariff advocates as parochial and industry-specific; yet Niles was clearly motivated by an altruistic economic nationalism. He was embittered when he saw his dream of tariff protection, internal improvements and the American System sacrificed to larger political realities. For all Niles' indirect influence, the Baltimore editor found himself ignored when concrete political decisions were made.

Although his American System might have eased tension and helped "avoid the coming storm," the South's rejection of those ideas meant that the choice in 1833, as his career came to a close, would have to fall between compromise and a premature civil war that might have involved the British.

Niles, then, was a compelling yet somewhat tragic figure, an early advocate of reasonable change who could see the solution to the problem in outline but who, in the end, began to lose sight of larger goals that altered his own proposals. Niles did find success on many levels: as a journalist, as a humanitarian, as an economist and as an advocate for America's unique brand of industrialization. His attempt to change the course of an impending catastrophe may seem Quixotic. But he sounded a warning and examined the range of alternatives, and that is often the best that can be expected of mortal editors.

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[133] "The Only Real Security: An Interview with Henry Ford," *The Deserted Village series*, No. 7, (New York: Chemical Foundation, 1936) Speaking on behalf of national self-sufficiency, Ford said: "We know that the American System includes every social benefit that men have desired...."

[134] Barbara Tuchman, *Practicing History* (New York: Knopf, 1981) 247.

Searching for the Social Construction of Radio

Tom Volek*

This article seeks to shed some light on the genesis of the social construction of radio in the 1920s.[1] Such examination provides greater insight into how we conceive of and use the media, and may offer insight into how the media evolve to fit into our larger social and cultural systems.[2]

The term "social construction" with respect to radio has been defined as "a fabric of meanings within which this technology would be wrapped," a clear and suitable meaning also used here.[3] This study explores the nature of that fabric of meanings from the perspective of the average citizen in the 1920s. This view stresses the relationship of the individual with radio technology — and the media it supported — at the birth of broadcasting.

The first premise herein is that "radio" was (and continues to be) an overarching technology that eventually supported two distinct media. The use of wireless (telegraphy and telephony) and its industry was in a mature stage by 1920. Indeed, a new type of company had been formed the previous year to serve essentially as a clearing house for all things wireless.[4] That company — the Radio Corporation of America — was a capstone to two decades of piecemeal and often acrimonious technological development.

Towards the end of 1926, *another* new type of communications company was formed, this one in response to the piecemeal, and often acrimonious and confusing evolution of a new use for radio technology: broadcasting. The new National

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[1] This article is part of a larger study that examined the evolution of broadcasting from technological novelty to social and cultural integration in the 1920s and 1930s.

[2] A number of authors have explored various cultural aspects of the media generally and radio specifically. Daniel Czitrom explores contemporary and popular reactions to the advent of the telegraph, motion pictures and radio. He then demonstrates the transition of thought surrounding each technology from initial utopian idealism to the economic reality of corporate capitalism. Daniel J. Czitrom, *Media and the American Mind: from Morse to McLuhan* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) 1982. Catherine Covert and John D. Stevens compiled a collection of essays exploring the nature of the relationship between society and various media during the 1920s and 1930s. Catherine L. Covert and John D. Stevens, *Mass Media Between the Wars: Perceptions of Cultural Tension, 1918-1941* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press) 1984. Susan Douglas explored the early days of wireless from a populist and cultural perspective, bringing a much needed re-evaluation to early broadcast scholarship. Susan J. Douglas, *Inventing American Broadcasting* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press) 1987.

[3] Douglas, xvii.

[4] Czitrom, 70-71. For an institutional-based overview of the period generally, see Christopher H. Sterling and John M. Kittross, *Stay Tuned: A Concise History of American Broadcasting* 2nd ed. (Belmont Calif.: Wadsworth) 1990, chapters 2 and 3.

Broadcasting Company focused on the production and distribution of ethereal content, something of no real concern to wireless users.

The second premise herein is that a sharp difference existed in how the two radio media affected the average person's daily life. In 1920, wireless had a radically different social use and public perception than did broadcasting of 1926 and later. In the eyes of the public, the former was like the telephone, though even further removed from daily life.[5] The latter was a daily, in-home companion. Each use of the technology certainly had its own social construction for average citizens and, then as now, there seems to be little intersection between them.

The third premise herein is that the sharp difference in public perception between wireless and broadcasting would be manifested in the popular cultural outlets of the day. We might expect to find wireless in 1920 portrayed to the masses as a media technology removed from daily life, perhaps enmeshed in a sense of awe and wonder consistent with something beyond their reach. Portrayals of broadcasting in its maturity should reflect on how the new mass medium enhanced daily life; a media technology whose social benefits to the average person were understood even if its workings were not.

The fourth premise herein is that the evolutionary process of developing a social construction around a new technology (like wireless becoming broadcasting) is interactive. That is, the users — the audience members — themselves are being reconstructed as the use of the technology advances. User expectations of the evolving technology change. Old social and cultural forms are transformed. For instance, reading about "the big game" in the paper and discussing it around the water cooler becomes listening to the game and discussing it around the cooler, and, eventually, listening to the game together around the radio and discussing the new, shared experience the next day. The users now rethink their social institutions in the light of the new media technology. Both the new medium and society are operating on a different, if not higher, level of social and cultural interaction. Thus social and cultural integration reflect maturity of both the technology and the users with respect to each other.[6]

This work focuses specifically on radio receiver evolution. The receiver was the home-use portion of the emerging broadcasting system. It was the point of contact through which listeners gained access to whatever "radio" had to offer, and the images that surrounded it serve as a window to the social construction of "radio" to the common person. Thus images of the radio receiver as a technological wonder — something understood and used by a small elite, a novelty to the public — gradually gave way to images of "radio" as an element in the social and cultural web surrounding the average listener.

One way to examine the impact of an emerging industrial or consumer technology on society and culture is through advertising.[7] Magazine advertisements

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[5] Consider that for average people who were not amateur radio operators, wireless was a transcontinental or intercontinental extension of telephone lines. Just like today, the average user gained access to wireless through the home telephone. Also consider how few average people were making those kinds of calls in the 1920s.

[6] A technology achieving widespread use eventually leads to Kuhn's paradigm shift, wherein society begins doing some task in a fundamentally different way. Thus we enter "the jet age" or "the computer age," — or "the radio age" — with concomitant shifts in social institutions, cultural manifestations and individual participation in society based around the new way of doing things.

[7] Several recent works have examined aspects of American life and technology through advertising. Roland Marchand's book *Advertising the American Dream* is an analysis of advertising as a

provide an abundant and useful body of information about life and popular culture in the 1920s. Although display advertisements are not a perfect reflection of the daily life of average citizens, they may be interpreted as other historical documents and "it may be possible to argue that ads actually surpass most other recorded communications as a basis for *plausible inference* about popular attitudes and values."[8] The advertisements served to educate the public, too. They demonstrated the transformation of radio into a socially useful tool. They also demonstrated to the public the transformation of society into the age of broadcasting.

This work examines the evolution of broadcasting through display advertisements in twelve general circulation and women's magazines offering radio receivers from 1920 through 1929.[9] Several advertisements from *Radio Age*, the radio hobbyists' magazine, are included to support discussion relating to the social construction of amateur radio, and several ads offering phonographs to the public in 1920 offer insight into the advanced level of social and cultural integration of the first consumer home-entertainment technology.

A total of 1,725 display ads offering receivers and such peripherals as speakers and amplifiers of one-quarter page or larger were examined.

Wireless and the Public

Clearly, in 1920 the wireless communications industry was in a mature stage carrying messages of short duration and specific, business or personal content for military and civilian maritime interests and in international communication. It was supported by a technology where professional operators who understood the basics of electromagnetic theory and were skilled in building, repairing and operating the complex apparatus. Although tinkering with wireless was their job, it was also no doubt an avocation for many of them. These users were in the system because they were paid to be there and because they wanted to be there.

The second group involved in wireless during this time was composed of the amateur or "ham" operators who began a radio boom of their own around 1907. A decade later some 8,500 with transmitters and receivers had joined the ethereal clubhouse that stretched across the country.[10] The growing legion of tinkerers proved a valuable training ground for wartime radio operators required by the navy, and, after the war, many provided the technical and engineering expertise

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window on society, and an examination of social and cultural values through advertising in the 1920s and 1930s. Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press) 1985. Two historians of technology examined the evolution of the computer into American life. William Aspray and Donald deB. Beaver, "Marketing the Monster: Advertising Computer Technology," *Annals of the History of Computing* 8 (April 1986): 127-43. Ruth Swartz Cowan used advertising to look at stereotypical women's roles during the twenties and thirties. Ruth Swartz Cowan, "Two Washes in the Morning and a Bridge Party at Night: The American Housewife between the Wars," *Women's Studies* 3 (1976): 147-72.

[8] Marchand, xix. Emphasis in original. For further detail on advertising as a historical window on society, see Marchand's introduction generally.

[9] The magazines surveyed were *American Magazine, Atlantic Monthly, Collier's, Harper's, Life, The Saturday Evening Post, Better Homes and Gardens, Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal, McCalls, Redbook,* and *Fortune.*

[10] Two to three hundred thousand more had receiving sets. Czitrom, 68.

for the infant broadcasting industry. These amateurs also provided the first audiences for early broadcasting.

The search for the social construction of radio generally begins with the amateurs, at least by implication. But while the amateurs certainly brought the radio apparatus into the parlor (much to the chagrin of those who kept a meticulous house and didn't care for an acid-filled car battery on the end table) a closer examination of how the public and the amateurs *used* radio and what it meant to each of them reveals not one but several social constructions surrounded "radio" in the early 1920s.

The meanings and practices the amateurs embedded in radio appear to be those of a geographically expansive yet exclusive club of two-way radio devotees who used the equipment for the sake of using and chatting about it. There is no evidence in any existing scholarship, nor any hint in these ads, that the amateurs were interested in programming for its own sake. These advertisements reflect on the technology itself and the thrill of operating that technology. Rather than emphasis on the content that could be heard through the receiver, the advertising stressed how far one could hear.[11]

The form in which the advertising presented the distance theme was itself suggestive of the highly coded nature of the radio brotherhood, a coding that transcended the mechanical dots-and-dashes of wireless telegraphy into a pervasive system of nomenclature and operations. The technical concepts and gear were enshrouded in a code of jargon. The call signs listed in the ads represented a specific person and location. 8XK was Conrad in Pittsburgh, for example. Conversational short-hand developed with which to converse over the air: "C Q - C Q — Q R W?" was a hailing code, asking for a response.[12] To participate in the brotherhood meant understanding the code as well as the technology.

From the average person's perspective, this use of radio amounted to a hobby or novelty. One had to be technically adept to set up and operate the equipment. When signals were pulled in, they were shipping or navy messages, chatter about tubes and wavelengths, or — maybe — an early experimental broadcast of unpredictable content. Curiosity no doubt first attracted the family and perhaps the neighbors to Junior's radio set for a few evenings, but once the thrill of tinkering with the equipment and hearing "something" from a distance wore off, "radio" had to offer social and personal benefits to the individual beyond novelty or go back to the basement.

The Phonograph and the Public

Alluded to earlier, the phonograph preceded the radio receiver into the home as a form of entertainment for the family. By 1920, the phonograph was a simple technology, easily used by its intended audience. It had a clearly defined social

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[11] Frank Conrad, 8XK, was listed among those "heard" in one ad. He was also "worked," i.e., engaged in a two-way conversation via code or voice. To "work" a station required a transmitter, not pictured or described. This ad was published some four months before Conrad put KDKA on the air in November with the "first" broadcast.

[12] *ARRL Handbook*, (Newington, Conn.: Amateur Radio Relay League, 1986) Chapter 38. Call signs and radio codes are still in use, of course. Consider the "10 code" in common use by the military and law enforcement agencies. For example, "10-4" means "message received and understood."

role. Some ads were designed as a "program" that resembled a concert program listing the night's musical selections for the theater audience, and one ad showed a group of artists and performers "brought into the home" by the phonograph.

The phonograph brought entertainment from the theater into the home. The ads focus on symphonic music and opera. Earlier, the phonograph also had brought vaudeville and its "variety" of music and entertainment to the home.[13] One "program" illustrated was a metaphor for an evening of planned entertainment in the social circumstances of the theater. When tied conceptually to the phonograph, it portrayed the instrument as something around which an evening of entertainment with friends could be planned. In this sense, the program also served as a model for the program listings which would evolve to assist the public in its use of broadcasting.

The phonograph advertising was a crucial element in the transfer of information to the public about what the technology offered, and it reflected the close cultural ties that the phonograph had developed with American society. Advertising offered the annual catalogues that listed all of the music and entertainment that could be brought into the home. Advertising presented new releases, reinforced the "theatre-in-your- home" theme and tied the technology into the cultural star system of the age (such as Caruso).

Also noteworthy in this 1920 advertising is the depiction of the phonograph as furniture. All of its workings are hidden in a fine, floor-standing cabinet.[14] The fantasy presentation of performers in the home reflects on the specific program content available, not on the phonograph as a technical device. Rather, if the machine is to attract attention to itself, it will be as stylish furniture.

These well-defined applications of music, theater, and furniture styling applied to the phonograph suggest a substantial measure of cultural integration of the technology, both as player and participant. The technology is supported by the information and dealer networks that are evidence of a mature industry which has identified the public's use for its product and has developed manufacturing, distribution and information systems to get its hardware and recordings efficiently to consumers by 1920.

Radio Goes "Public"

The first advertisements for radio paraphernalia targeted to the public that were uncovered by this survey appeared in 1922, a year and a half after Conrad's "first" broadcast. These ads largely exhibited wireless telephone technology in concept and name. The equipment from Musio and Sleeper is obviously right out of the amateur tradition. Sleeper's device is built from a kit and both require battery, antenna and ground installation. The batteries and headphones, and tubes for the Sleeper set, had to be purchased separately. An additional component, the loudspeaker, was offered by Magnavox. If added to a receiver, it too would have to be properly connected into the system, with separate connections to the receiver and a battery.

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[13] Sydney Head and Christopher Sterling, *Broadcasting in America* 5th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin) 1987, 40.

[14] Except, of course, the hand-crank, whose function dictated its location and accessibility.

The industry's overall unsettled understanding of just what "radio" was and what it had to offer the public also was evident in the advertising. Magnavox referred to its "reproducer" as "the Magnavox Radio," even though the device was a loudspeaker, not a receiver. In addition to its use to stimulate male bonding through set construction and when the men gathered "at the club," nebulous suggestions were made that radio brought information and music for lodge dances. Yet the industry's lack of programming structure seemed to offer little that a social chairman could plan around: "something or other going on almost every hour!"

The first advertisement from the Radio Corporation of America tempered the image of broadcasting as an extension of wireless.[15] The "Aeriola Grand" that was pictured was a step towards an integrated set with a speaker, and all of the technical apparatus was enclosed in a floor-standing cabinet. It still required the battery, ground and antenna connections; however, with its top closed the "works" were hidden from view.

Although the RCA ad said little about broadcast content, the design of the Aeriola Grand suggested a conceptual connection with the phonograph and its predominantly musical role. The radio mimicked the "furniture" tradition of the phonograph in its general overall dimensions and access to its operation through a hinged lid. The name itself also suggested the epitome of musical instruments, the grand piano.

As with the other 1922 advertisements, only vague social roles are presented. "Music, news and education" could be brought into the home. Radio promised to solve the problem of "loneliness and isolation," a theme RCA and other manufacturers would tout through the decade. With little specific to say about the cultural offerings of radio, RCA rather reflected on the technology and the company's pre-eminence in radio research and manufacturing. Even the celebrity involved in the ad — Mr. Marconi himself — was a "star" of technology rather than of culture.

A major impediment to radio use by average people was the reliance of early sets on headphones for sound reproduction. Headphones tethered listeners to the equipment and isolated them from social contact. In a 1923 RCA ad, "Jimmy" has just received a radio for Christmas and Grandmother is listening on the headphones while he watches. They cannot enjoy the program together. But the loudspeaker enabled listening to radio to be a shared experience when a number of people could listen to one set and become a mass audience in doing so, as stressed in a 1923 Radiola Christmas ad that suggested a new loudspeaker would enable the family to "tune in — and *everybody* listen!" It would appear that the loudspeaker was one of the key technological advances that permitted the metamorphosis of wireless telephony into broadcast radio.

Through the middle of the decade, the social roles that broadcasting might serve for the public were limited by the uncertainty that surrounded the medium. A 1924 Workrite message depicted father and son hoping to get a Los Angeles station on their receiver "if it's on the air." An irregular broadcasting schedule gave those who would organize their own or their club's social events around radio little opportunity to do so. Early content was marked by broadcasts of

[15] Although RCA's logo proclaimed "World Wide Wireless" until a year later.

"events," such as sporting contests and the political conventions. These ads and others offered a laundry list of information, education, and entertainment via the air gave only vague descriptions of what the listener *might* find at any given time, with no reference to *where* such content might be found or even where someone might look for more information. Although, unquestionably, there were additional sources of programming information, such as newspaper listings and columns about radio in magazines, the lack of specific event or recurring programming, celebrities or stars strongly supports the notion of an immature and amoebic broadcast programming situation through the mid 1920s. But the ads clearly demonstrate broadcasting's movement away from the wireless tradition based on themes of awe and wonder and towards integration with the established culture of the day.

The ads for event programming also demonstrate broadcasters' efforts to tie the new medium to established social and cultural tradition. The ads educated the public that radio could present familiar cultural forms, but create new experiences while doing so. By late in the 20s, radio had developed its own specific programming and formats, laying the groundwork for a social and cultural identity separate from the phonograph, the theater, sports and the others. Thus throughout the 20s the public continually became educated to radio's changing — and increasingly unique — identity.

Evolving Social Roles for Radio

Where radio had been depicted as the center of attention in the earlier advertising, that stand softened after 1925. New and subtle uses for broadcasting in social and family life began to appear in the presentations.

While advertisers continued to show radio as the center of socially desirable situations through the decade, Atwater Kent recognized the difference between "foreground" and "background" broadcasting roles by name in a 1925 ad that depicted four social situations in the home that used broadcasting. In two of the ad's panels, formally-attired couples are dancing or gathered around the box, listening intently. The two other panels show a dinner party and afternoon bridge club, both served by radio providing "music as an agreeable background to conversation." Rather than simply serving as a source of entertainment in circumstances arranged around it, radio began to assume a subservient role as an enhancement to a wider variety of traditional social entertainment situations such as dining and bridge club, situations themselves well entrenched in the social and cultural values of the day.

Radio also assumed a deferential role to everyday family activities. Although perhaps stylized to reflect persons in an upper-middle class environment, several 1927 advertisements depicted broadcasting use right out of family life today. The Radiola provided a means of occupying and entertaining the kids, either in a background role while brother read or a foreground role as sister listened. The parent could go about her daily duties while radio provided a background diversion for her, too. An Atwater Kent message suggested that radio could have a cathartic effect, calming the child (and parent) after a busy day. Another Atwater Kent ad shows father relaxing in his easy chair, dialing around on the radio for suitable music to help him "to forget" the concerns of the office.

Radio as Program Provider

From its earliest days the advertising demonstrates that broadcasting quickly developed its technological edge to present live events to the public at home such as the 1920 elections and the 1924 political conventions noted previously. When coupled with a measure of predictability and promotion, this offered tangible social benefits that the public could understand. People were used to gathering at the theater for a concert or play, or at the stadium for a football or baseball game. Instead, now they could gather for an event in the comfort of home.

The advertising demonstrated that by the late twenties, the vague "entertainment" and "event" offerings had evolved into specific programs aimed at general audiences. The "WGY Players" were "the world's first radio dramatic company" in 1924. The "Atwater Kent Radio Artists" presented "opera and concert." By 1929 at least five more manufacturers were sponsoring music-oriented programs. *Collier's* magazine began sponsoring a variety hour in 1927, and introduced a mystery serial the next year. The description of the program's content appeared to parallel that of the publication, an early effort at translating the "magazine format" into radio.

The ability of broadcasting to replicate phonograph music reproduction and its new, unique benefit to present timely information and live events were evident to the industry and the public from the earliest days of the boom.[16] The industry moved to support these two obvious uses. Those who sampled the novelty found it offered content they liked and became regular listeners. They gradually turned from listening to music on the phonograph to enjoying broadcasting's wider range of entertainment and information offerings. Thus radio offered familiarity with existing media and identifiable potential — at the right price — to find initial public acceptance. The industry then built on that foundation to deliver on the medium's promises as its novelty value declined — and the industry educated the audience to the new age it was ushering in. By the end of the twenties, the stage was set for radio's "Golden Age," when new genres developed specifically for the medium were introduced, such as situation comedies.

Radio as Cultural Participant

Radio began to emerge as a consumer technology late in the 1920s with dealer networks, the positioning of receivers in the marketplace based on cost and quality, and even the establishment of payment plans so one could enjoy radio now and pay for it later. A brief experiment with "model years" in the late twenties (borrowed from the reigning king of consumer technology, the automobile) came into full bloom by the mid thirties, with most radio manufacturers introducing new models annually. The radio sets and the images that surrounded them were becoming increasingly enmeshed in American culture.

Nowhere was the transformation from novelty to social and cultural integration better depicted than in the evolution of radio-as-furniture. The earliest ads of the Aeriola Grand introduced radio-as-furniture in the phonograph tradition during an era when depictions of radio-as-technology coexisted with those of radio-as-

[16] In fact, phonograph music and timely information were an integral part of KDKA's inaugural broadcast the night of the Harding-Cox presidential election in 1920.

furniture. As radio's novelty thrill began to lose emphasis, cabinetry to enclose the tuners and tubes became common to all manufacturers. Atwater Kent presented the last open-chassis model receiver that was found in the advertising in December of 1925. Furniture manufacturers such as Pooley, Red Lion and Showers also brought their reputations to the market, enclosing the relatively compact receiver apparatus in their own brand-name cabinets. Some continued to emphasize fine furniture pieces with console models while others built radio cabinets as table top appointments. Eventually, Crosley rounded out the decade by presenting radio-as-table, blending the technology into an "occasional table" so cleverly that the radio disappeared.

A 1927 Red Lion Cabinet Company ad pictured a woman at her home communications center that featured all of the modern communications technologies of the day. In addition to serving as a letter-writing desk that housed the radio receiver and speaker, the cabinet also provided a home for the household telephone. Whether intentional or not, the illustration depicted the modern woman in her home connected with civilization through all of the communications networks of the day.

In 1928 the Showers-Crosley Radio Ensemble reached the height of radio-as-furniture. The radio cabinet didn't just match the room decor — it came with its own matching pieces, including a "console mirror" for the wall. The unique operational concepts of radio technology even begat an entirely new type of furniture: the tuning bench![17]

By 1930, "radio" was no longer a technical or performing novelty. Broadcasting had developed subtle roles in everyday life. It had become woven into the social and cultural fabric, both as a prestigious consumer item itself and as a supplement to an active social life. The thrill and magic of hearing ethereal waves had been replaced by social thrills and the magic of status.

Thoughts on the Social Construction of Radio

Earlier discussion has asserted that the wireless tradition encompassed a geographically diffuse club of individuals who met through a highly technical and coded brotherhood, an assertion supported by the advertising from *QST*. Some ads from wireless manufacturers were also found in the general circulation magazines, but a separate, one-way broadcasting tradition was also evident from the start. Even though broadcasting's benefits were presented vaguely to the public, the themes were still a distinct break from the amateur tradition in that they offered "music, news and education" rather than technospeak and the thrill of building or operating the apparatus.

Socialization through the amateur tradition was based on the operators' physical isolation and the separation of traditional society from the ethereal "clubhouse." Those participating in the brotherhood were tied to their social partners through a web of radios and the ether. Headsets eliminated distractions and helped the operator focus on his correspondent across the city or across the continent. Closing the door and clamping on the headsets shut out surrounding

[17] One wonders if the early tuning process was really *that* time consuming! The idea of technical function dictating furniture form certainly is in evidence today. Consider how computer technology has given rise to customized workstations and home-use ensembles.

reality and opened the gate to "Radio Fairyland." But the entire process documented by the advertising is one of broadcasting's becoming integrated with the larger value system of society, not separated from it. Rather than remaining a visible bunch of wires and glowing tubes, the radio set evolved into an object of status incidental to its technology or even its function. Broadcasting offered entertainment and information from the wider world; content that not only reflected wider American society, but was actually borrowed from it. And the kinds of content that broadcasting offered could be shared at the time of broadcast with a circle of family or friends, or after the fact, when discussing a political or variety show the next day with friends. For the average person, broadcasting came to affect daily life while wireless did not.

The broadcasting experiments of amateurs like Frank Conrad should not be confused with the amateur tradition in which the ham operators participated. For the long term, what interested the masses about radio was not — and could not be — provided by the amateur network. After the birth of broadcasting, the channels quickly became swamped, not by average people who wanted to talk, but by those who were ready to provide content that average people would listen to — and that meant entertainment and some information. It was the public conception of radio as one-way, socially-oriented broadcasting, not the amateur conception of radio as a two-way private telephone, that led to the formation of networks, NBC, CBS and the rest of the broadcasting industry.

Rather than wireless, it appears the public's conceptual foundation for broadcasting came from the live entertainment of the era, existing print-based media, and the phonograph. Theater-based social activities and sports events had been a part of the American scene for decades. In 1920 the public expected timely information and entertainment from newspapers and magazines. And by 1920 the phonograph was fully integrated into society. It was a mature home-entertainment technology, had a clearly defined concept of programming, and was well entrenched in the web of social meanings and values of its day. The phonograph also provided models for receiver cabinetry and advertising themes.

Radio built its own place in the web of meanings and practices surrounding the audience. It borrowed some from the existing cultural outlets, but developed its own identity, too. Between 1920 and 1929 the audience also rethought radio's position with respect to the cultural media of the day. By late in the twenties, radio sold itself as an integral part of "modern living," and "modern" people came to rely on radio's entertainment and information and to partake in the new experiences radio offered.

While the amateurs no doubt brought radio receivers into hundreds of thousands of American homes and created the potential for a mass audience in doing so, the conception of the wireless brotherhood in using radio appears to have provided no basis for the technology's social construction as a mass medium. The social construction of broadcasting appears to have come from an amalgam of live entertainment, the print media, and the phonograph.

"Up in the Air": Re-considering the Cultural Origins of Broadcasting and the Myth of Entertainment During the 1920s

Elaine Prostak Berland *

As the United States nears the end of the Twentieth Century, broadcasting is primarily an entertainment medium. Indeed entertainment has become so embedded in contemporary life as a way of thinking about media that it is difficult to imagine other uses for communication technologies or to take media messages seriously and analyze them critically. In particular entertainment renders unproblematic the ways in which media reorganize social relations.[1]

The use of broadcast technologies for mass entertainment, however, was not inevitable. Rather the social use of the first electronic medium was contested cultural terrain. During the early and mid-1920s a variety of uses was imagined for the radio. Uncertain about how to make its broadcast service viable, a dynamic, developing new radio industry searched existing cultural forms for its structure, audience, and identity. By the end of the decade, the radio was constructed as a broadcasting medium, financed through advertising and organized through national corporate networks with limited governmental regulation. Entertainment emerged as the icon of consumer ethos. Entertainment represented itself as a democratic, value-free strategy, particularly by comparison to other religious, cultural, educational, political uses that by the late 1920s were represented as being more openly ideological. Thus, early discourse about entertainment set the terms for a more openly ideological debate that would occur during the late 1920s and early 1930s.

The purpose of this essay is to challenge the entertainment myth and broaden the scope of inquiry to include competing claims over radio use. Although radio was the first of the electronic media, it has been the least explored.[2] Within the

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* The author would like to acknowledge the careful readings of this work by John Pauly, Jean Folkerts, James Baughman, and Robert McChesney.

[1]The concept of contemporary media as entertainment is advanced in such works as Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1985) and Robert P. Snow, *Creating Media Culture* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1983). Rather than a characteristic inherent in modern communication technology, entertainment, this essay proposes, is a complex, dynamic practice developed in response to the particular cultural tensions of a historical period, a concept advanced by Raymond Williams in *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (New York: Schoken Books, 1975) and James W. Carey in "The Language of Technology: Talk,Text, and Template as Metaphors for Communication" in *Communication and the Culture of Technology*, ed. by Martin J. Medhurst and Tarla Rai Peterson (Pullman, Wash.: Washington State University Press, 1990).

[2]Examples of works exploring Americans' responses to other "machines" from a cultural perspective include John William Ward, "The Meaning of Lindberg's Flight," *American Quarterly* 10 (Spring 1958): 3-16; James Flink, *The Car Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1975); James W.

past decade there has been a resurgence of interest in U.S. radio broadcasting, its origins and its implications for the development of new communications technologies, policies, and systems at home and abroad.[3] Recent works detail the legal, economic, political and ideological origins to deconstruct earlier assumptions that regarded radio development as technologically determined and socially inevitable.[4] Less accessible are radio's cultural underpinnings; thus assumptions about the nature of radio as a mass entertainment medium remain intact.

In fact, the first decade of radio broadcasting witnessed considerable experiments in and speculation about the appropriate uses, forms, and sources of radio programs. Although important aspects of constructing radio were carried out, as broadcast historians have documented, within the broadcasting and electronics industry or between those corporate interests and the federal government behind closed doors, a significant portion of radio discourse was carried on in the public press, an area yet to receive adequate attention. This essay is part of a larger research project that identifies the range of possible uses imagined and represented in the press between 1920 and 1929, and reads those arguments over broadcast use within the broader historical context of an on-going debate over mass culture and social change.[5] In that debate, what radio came to mean must be explored within the broader context of what it did not come to mean — that is, what and whose alternative definitions for radio use were discussed, which ones were discarded and why. It is within this context of competing cultural claims advanced by competing social interests that issues of how media mediate can be more fully understood.[6]

Radio first entered the American household during the 1920s. In the midst of a decade of rapid technological and social change, radio moved modern communications inside the home, and for millions of Americans became the single most important contact with a larger world outside. The popular press gave considerable attention to the emerging cultural forms of radio. A variety of popular lit-

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Carey and John J. Quirk, "The Mythos of the Electronic Revolution," *The American Scholar* (Summer 1970): 395-424; Daniel Czitrom, *Media and the American Mind from Morse to McLuhan* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Carolyn Marvin, *When Old Technologies Were New: Thinking About Communication in the Late Nineteeth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[3]Excellent bibliographic guides to the development of radio history can be found in Christopher Sterling, "American Electronic Media: A Survey Bibliography," *American Studies International* 29 (October 1991): 28-54; Diane Foxhill Carothers, *Radio Broadcasting from 1920 to 1900: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland, 1991) and Thomas Allen Greenfield, *Radio: A Reference Guide* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1989). Also see the new *Journal of Radio Studies* 1 (1992).

[4]Reinterpretations of radio history include Philip Rosen, *The Modern Stentors: Radio Broadcasters and the Federal Government 1920-1934* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980); Hugh Aitken, *The Continuous Wave: Technology and American Radio, 1900-1932* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985); Susan Douglas, *Inventing American Broadcasting 1899-1922* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univeristy Press, 1987), and Robert McChesney, *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle for the Control of U.S. Broadcasting, 1928-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[5]See Elaine J. Prostak (Berland), "Up in the Air: The Debate Over Radio Use During the 1920's," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Kansas, 1983. Research draws upon non-technical articles on radio use published in newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals as identified through *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature (1919-1930)*; *International Index to Periodicals (1919-1930)*; the *New York Times Index*.

[6]Joli Jensen, *Redeeming Modernity: Contradictions in Media Criticism* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1990).

erature sprang up to feed and support public fascination with the new medium. While technical wireless publications for amateur operators existed in the previous decade, a number of general audience radio periodicals developed very quickly after the first broadcast stations went on the air. Early publications in 1922 included *Radio Age*, *Radio Dealer*, *Radio Digest*, and the most prominent trade and fan magazine, *Radio Broadcast*, published by Doubleday Book Company. Existing mass-circulation magazines and newspapers including the *Literary Digest*, the *New York Times*, and the *Christian Science Monitor* added regular radio sections. A proliferation of radio "how-to" books appeared on the market as did a series of boys' thrillers, *The Radio Boys*. By 1925, one observer noted the sheer amount of space devoted to the radio: some five thousand newspapers carried program listings; fifty general magazines had radio sections; there were three radio weeklies, sixteen monthly radio magazines, eight specialized trade papers, and some two hundred and seventy-five technical radio books.[7] While corporate radio interests clearly used the press to promote radio sales and the press used public fascination with radio to sell newspapers, such coverage sustained public attention to radio and provided terms for imagining and legitimizing new uses for it. In one of the first doctoral dissertations on radio, Hiram L. Jome remarked that "hardly a day passes that the newspapers and magazines do not report a new field for the wireless. Radio is achieving things which were formerly regarded as impossible."[8]

During the early and mid-1920s entertainment was only one of several alternative constructs for understanding radio. For the most part, press commentaries celebrated the transforming and redemptive properties of radio and its ability to remake the world. From the outset, as other studies have documented, commercial advertising had little support. Advertising was widely regarded as "mercenary," "positively offensive to great numbers of people" and the "quickest way to kill broadcasting."[9]

Central to early public discourse about radio were claims that radio should serve the public good. Political figures, including U.S. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, sought to answer the question "to what use should radio be put"

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[7]Frederick J. George, "Radio—A New Industrial Giant," *American Review of Reviews* 71 (February 1925): 167-70. In fact publishing interests owned 12 percent of broadcast stations in the early 1920s, see "Revised List of U.S. and Canadian Broadcasting Stations," *Radio Broadcast* 3 (May 1923): 78, 80-4.

[8]Hiram L. Jome, *Economics of the Radio Industry* (New York: A.W. Shaw,1925), 73. Other examples include Leon Whipple, "The Red Radio," *Survey* 54 (July 1, 1925): 406; Bruce Bliven, "How Radio Is Remaking Our World," *Century* 2 (June 1924): 148; Bruce Barton, "This Magic Called Radio: What Will It Mean in Your Home in the Next Ten Years *American Magazine* 93 (June 1922): 72.

[9]"Who Should Pay for Broadcasting," *Radio Broadcast* 1 (May 1922): 1-4; *Printer's Ink* (April 27, 1922); "A mistake to Broadcast Advertising by Radio," *Printer's Ink* (February 22, 1923), 157; *Radio Dealer* 1(July 1922): 33 and Herbert Hoover at the Third National Radio Conference October 1924, cited in Sterling; Susan Smulyan, "'And Now a Word From Our Sponsors': Commercialization of American Broadcast Radio, 1920-1934" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1985).

[10]Herbert Hoover,"Radio's Great Future," *Radio Broadcast* 1 (September 1922): 433 and *Radio Broadcast* 6 (December 1924): 260. For details of Hoover's role see Rosen, *Modern Stentors*; Ellis W. Hawley, "Herbert Hoover, the Commerce Secretariat, and the Vision of an Associated State, 1921-28," *Journal of American History 61* (June 1974): 116-40, and Louise Benjamin, "Radio Regulation in the 1920s: Free Speech Issues in the Development of Radio and the Radio Act of 1927" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1985).

in ways that would make radio a "necessary institution" in American society. Although Hoover's approach to developing technical, business and political structures for radio was embedded in his engineering training and the pragmatics of a modern associative state, his cultural frame for radio use echoed an older ethic of service and individualistic order. He reminded Americans, particularly radio businessmen, that "an obligation rests on us to see that radio is devoted to real service" and that "it is not the ability to transmit but the character of what is transmitted that really counts."[10]

David Sarnoff envisioned radio as a great public service institution, much like Andrew Carnegie's public library. A Russian Jewish immigrant who became RCA's general manager, Sarnoff believed radio could bring "democratic education and culture" to the masses, and thereby ensure their assimilation into the mainstream of American society and culture. Sarnoff proclaimed: "It is more important to the progress of mankind that ten million men, through the slow process of general education, should rise in intellectual stature, even though a fraction of an inch, than that a few should be able to leap to the heights of Olympus."[11]

More frequently early to mid-1920s press reports imagined radio's service function within pre-existing social practices such as "education," "culture," "politics," "religion," and "agriculture." In periodical indexes of that time, entertainment does not even appear as a heading for categorizing broadcasting.[12] Rather radio was, as H.V. Kaltenborn, editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle* and radio commentator proclaimed, "the fifth estate" with potential power to rival other established molders of public life such as the press, school, church, and platform.[13] There were visions of radio producing "a super radio orchestra" and "a super radio university" wherein "every home has the potentiality of becoming an extension of Carnegie Hall or Harvard University."[14] Prominent radio industry leaders like Owen Young, chairman of General Electric, promoted radio as "the greatest potential educator and spreader of culture that has ever been dreamed of, "one unhampered by the press' problems of public literacy and motivation or distribu-

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[11]"Sarnoff Belittles Wells' Radio Ideas," *New York Times*, April 29, 1927; and David Sarnoff, *Looking Ahead: The Papers of David Sarnoff* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 66-7. Other radio industry leaders including Admiral Bullard, FRC chairman; Lee DeForest, radio inventor, and Atwater Kent, owner of a major radio manufacturing interest, also responded to Wells' attacks; see "Radio Men Counter-Attack H.G. Wells Bombardments," *New York Times*, May 8, 1927.

[12]*Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* added the next heading of "Radio Broadcasting" to its 1922-1924 index in order to accommodate the volume as well as type of new literature being published on radio. Neither *Reader's Guide* nor *New York Times Index* list entertainment as a separate heading for radio whereas these other terms are listed 1920-1929.

[13]H.V. Kalternborn, "On the Air: Radio's Responsibility As a Molder of Public Opinion," *Century* 112 (October 1926): 671; "Radio and Public Information," *Literary Digest* 73 (June 24, 1922): 24; Donald Wilheim, "Radio-the Modern Peace Dove," *Illustrated World* 37 (April 1922): 202-5; William H. Easton, "Wonders of the Radio Telephone, " *Current History* 16 (April 1922): 26; Nor was all the commentary about radio's potential power interpreted as democratic, see Joseph T. Hart, "Radiating Culture," *Survey* 47 (March 18, 1922): 383-6; Edwin E. Slosson, "Voices in the Air," *Independent* 108 (April 22, 1922): 410; Morris L. Ernst, "Who Shall control the Air?" *Nation* 122 (April 21, 1926): 443-4.

[14]Waldeman Kaempffert, "The Social Destiny of Radio," *Forum* 71 (June 1924),770; "Radio as a World-wide Educational Influence," *Literary Digest* 76 (February 3, 1923): 29, "A Big Demand for Educational Radio" *Radio Broadcast* 3 (June 1923): 94-7. Academic researchers included such uses of radio in their studies of the decade's most important technological innovations; see *Recent Social Trends: A Report of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends*, vol. 1 and 2 (New York: McGraw Hill, 1933).

tion."[15]

In fact early radio, as in previous media, was a series of local, live experiments by rather diverse interest groups. Newspapers, churches, universities, and small businesses set up hundreds of local broadcast towers to sell newspapers, God, education, and other products and causes to local audiences. Non-profit broadcasters, particularly those from land-grant Midwestern universities, were critical to the technical development and popular acceptance of broadcasting. By 1925 more than 200 non-profit broadcasting operations were on the air.[16] At the outset even manufacturers intent on selling radio sets and commercial broadcasters seeking profit but uncertain about programming tried to piggyback on these experiments. They hoped that the good-will from providing high quality, non-commercial programs would vest their efforts with a cachet of social responsibility, respectability, and consumer acceptance.[17]

Although groups imagined diverse uses for broadcasting, radio discourse was not open in reality and not all voices were equal. Broadcast histories have long acknowledged a variety of competitors (church, university, newspapers, retail stores) for the airwaves, and recent studies acknowledge the significance of "culture and society" on technological development. What has not received full discussion are the hierarchies, and issues of power implicit in these cultural definitions. The tendency has been to talk about the educational, cultural, and religious uses of radio as though such uses are universal, consensual and static. These categories are deceptively simple and tend to obscure the tensions over — and within — the cultural forms that existed both on the early airwaves and in the writings about radio as well as in the social relations of the 1920s.

At issue in the 1920s discourse about radio was whose definition of public service, public good, and culture would prevail in the new medium. The competing definitions are particularly apparent in the debates over broadcast music. From the outset music programs dominated local airwaves. Local broadcasters' needs to finance and fill airtime, diverse regional audience tastes, and Hoover's 1922 ban on broadcast of phonograph records led to increased live performances by local talent. This gave pre-network radio a diverse, experimental, and erratic but exciting quality.[18]

During the early 1920s radio was imagined to be a means to bring culture and civilization into the middle-class home. Radio stations aired classical music as a "high class" service to build popular acceptance and audiences. Westinghouse-owned station KYW in Chicago, developed a large listener following by filling its 1921-22 season with broadcasts of the Chicago Civic Opera. Westinghouse's

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[15]Stanley Frost, "Radio, Our Next Great Step Forward," *Collier's* 69 (April 8, 1922), 4. Also, Martin P. Rice, "The Future of Radio Education, *Journal of the National Education Association* 13 (March 1924): 82

[16]S.E. Frost, *Education's Own Stations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937). Robert J. Blakely, *To Serve the Public Interest: Educational Broadcasting in the United States* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1979).

[17]This is a continuing pattern in American response to the innovation of communication technologies; see Czitrom, *Media and the American Mind.*

[18]William McKinley Randle Jr., "History of Radio Broadcasting and Its Social and Economic Effect on Radio Broadcasting and Its Social and Economic Effect on the Entertainment Industry, 1920-1930" (Ph.D. dissertation, Western Reserve University, 1966) and Robert Huchette Wilkins, "The Role of Serious Music in the Development of American Radio, 1920-1938" (Master's thesis, University of North Dakota, 1969).

other stations, KDKA in Pittsburgh and WJZ in Newark, regularly aired classical offerings. AT&T's WEAF broadcast New York Philharmonic concerts, while newspaper-owned stations such as the *Detroit News*'s WWJ and the *Chicago Daily News*'s WMAQ also broadcast classical music to promote a "high-quality" image.[19]

Among those who viewed radio as an ally in their campaign of aesthetic uplift were those whom Frank Biocca categorized as guardians of culture. This cultural elite, Biocca argues, was composed of a circle of mercantile, "old money" art patrons; a strata of nouveau riche entrepreneurs of recent European descent eager for respectability; a large music education industry catering to the middle and upper classes, and "taste setters" afflicted with the patronage of the arts.[20]

Likewise, prominent radio critics regarded classical music broadcasts as a way to democratize the benefits of culture. In 1922, one *Radio Broadcast* writer claimed that already radio was "making life over" for "thousands of John Taplowski's in the grim back streets along the muddy Chicago River."[21] Jennie Irene Mix, a *Radio Broadcast* critic, predicted that even this little taste of "good music" broadcast over the airwaves would "arouse the desire in the majority of people for hearing an entire concert, perhaps for the first time in their lives."[22] Prior to radio, in fact, most Americans had little opportunity to hear classical music performed live by concert artists. Between the 1842 founding of the New York Philharmonic — the first American orchestra of symphonic quality — and 1922, only 28 symphonies had been established in the United States. Even in New York City, only one per cent of the population attended classical music concerts.[23]

Further, the use of radio to promote "good music" was viewed as a national mission. As the United States emerged from World War I a creditor nation and an international power, many Americans longed for a superior national culture commensurate with its new political and economic world standing. Kingsley Welles, a music critic for *Radio Broadcast*, argued that an awakening of the masses' "thirst for the best in music" was crucial to the nation's future and cultural progress.[24] There were visions of radio creating "a more cultured race," by bringing about "a bloodless revolution in musical taste and appreciation," wherein "the rank and file" would be made more equal to "refined European cultures."[25] Broadcasting "good music," it was proposed, would make America a

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[19]Ibid, 60 and Wilkins, 46. C. McLauchlin, "What the Detroit News Has Done," *Radio Broadcast* 1 (June 1922), 140; "Broadcasting Wagner," *Literary Digest* 77 (June 9, 1923), 27; *Radio Broadcast* 3 (May 1923), 10-11; and *New York Times* (February 20, 1923).

[20]Frank Biocca, "Early Radio and the Clash of Musical Cultures," *Journal of Popular Culture* 24 (1990), 1. Also Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).

[21]George Stone, "Radio Has gripped Chicago," *Radio Broadcast* 1 (October 1922): 503-11. Also see Samuel L. Rothafel and Raymond Francis Yates, *Broadcasting: Its New Day* (New York: Century, 1925; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1971).

[22]Jennie Irene Mix, "Radio Talent Is Not Localized," *Radio Broadcast* 5 (July 1924): 208-10.

[23]Wilkins, 44. In some respects, as Helen Horowitz argues in the case of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, there was a class bias in the ways orchestras were designed to keep the people out. See Horowitz, *Culture & the City: Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago from the 1880s to 1917* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1976): 109-11.

[24]Kingsley Welles, "An Orchestra Conductor Speaks About Radio," *Radio Broadcast* 7 (July 1925): 473-4.

[25]Charles Orchard, "Is Radio Making America Musical?" *Radio Broadcast* 5 (October 1924):

cultural leader abroad and build a new unified American culture at home.

Another major use envisioned for radio was "old-time country music". The term encompassed old ballads, gospel, Bluegrass, "cowboy" songs from the West and what came to be called "hillbilly" music. Local stations in the South developed such formats as a means to reach native white, rural, working-class audiences, capitalize on regional musicians, and attract advertisers interested in reaching rural people as customers. For example, Nashville radio in the 1920s provided performers to further Southern musical traditions.[26]

Support for broadcasting "old-time country music" came from varied sources. Business interests seized upon the format as means to construct rural people as customers. The highly publicized country radio program "The National Barn Dance," begun in April 1924, originated from Chicago station WLS, "the World's Largest Store," owned by Sears and Roebuck Company. Sears created the program to attract rural people, who were a major market for Sears' catalogue business. "The Grand Old Opry" was started on WSM ("We Shield Millions"), the station of National Life and Accident Company, which had issued a new insurance program for rural Americans.[27]

It is important to note that both promoters of classical music and country music, despite their differences, shared a desire to use radio to combat the spread of "jazz". William W. Hinshaw, a WJZ broadcaster in Newark, New Jersey, denounced jazz as "unhealthy" and "immoral," while another broadcaster called it an "abomination" that should be "absolutely eliminated."[28] An editorial writer for the *New York Times* expressed outrage that radio would force upon its listeners "music done by people imported from the backwoods of Haiti," music he viewed as "products not of innovation, but of incompetence."[29]

Opposition to jazz broadcasts was intensely emotional and overactive. The term "jazz" — whose direct reference was to the syncopated rhythms that African-American musicians carried with them in their northward migration to Harlem, Chicago's South Side, and elsewhere — became an emblem of "modern" : black, urban, immigrant, what Americans fearful of social change detested. Jazz broadcasts were indicative of change: radio was moving from the black South and urban ghettos of the North into the mainstream of American home. For opponents of jazz any amount of jazz in any form, even jazz performed by white musicians and broadcast in the late evening, was too much and had to be stopped.[30]

For example, powerful industrialist Henry Ford viewed the broadcast of "old-time country music" as a means to revive traditional values while simultane-

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455; Winslow Duerr, "Will Radio Replace the Phonograph?" *Radio Broadcast* 2 (November 1922): 52-4; "March of Time," *Radio Broadcast* 4 (November 1923): 6-9.

[26]Herbert H. Howard points out in "Country Music Radio Part 1: The Tale of Two Cities," *Journal of Radio Studies* 1 (1992): 109 that hillbilly music was not supported by Knoxville's or Nashville's educated elite until it began to make money.

[27]Discussion of radio's role in the revival of Southern music tradition see Randle, "History of Broadcasting," 444. Insightful discussion of role of radio in rural life see Reynold M. Wik, "The Radio in Rural America," *Agricultural History* 55 (October 1981): 339-50.

[28]*Radio Broadcast* 1 (September 1922): 300; John Wallace, "Tolerating Jazz," *Radio Broadcast* 11 (August 1927): 220.

[29]*New York Times*, October 8, 1924.

[30]For a more detailed description of the role of black performers in early radio, see J. Fred McDonald's *Don't Touch That Dial! Radio Programming in American Life From 1920 to 1960* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979): 327-70.

ously countering the spread of modernism. Ford, described by historians as a vicious anti-Semite, viewed modernism itself as a Jewish plot aimed at destroying traditional Christian values, which he believed to be at the core of America's success as a nation. For him, the promotion of traditional cultural outlets, such as fiddle-playing and square dancing, was good clean entertainment and more. Old-time music became another weapon to combat the spread of jazz, modern dancing, and popular music, which he attributed to the "Jewish trust" music industry, blacks, liberals, and other Ford-proclaimed subversive forces. In 1924, Ford used his newspaper, the *Dearborn Independent*, to attack station WLS. Though on the surface, Ford and WLS appeared to share a common goal of promoting old-country music to a rural audience, Ford was suspicious of WLS owner Julius Rosenwald, the president of Sears and Roebuck, a prominent philanthropist, and a Jew. The paper warned readers that organized "Jewry" was beaming a Communist conspiracy to innocent farm youth over WLS airwaves. It was indeed ironic that many Americans like Ford who resisted the spread of modern industrial life did so by embracing its very embodiment in such modern technologies as the radio and the automobile.[31]

Likewise cultural elitists viewed the broadcast of classical music as the means to turn back the spread of what was viewed as an inferior form of culture. Robert H. Schauffler, music critic for *Collier's*, was most explicit about the assumption of cultural superiority when he wrote: "Here, for the first time, is a popular music which has become a pervasive agent of the highbrow...radio has ground jazz almost to death."[32] Phrases such as "good music," "finer music," and "serious music" were euphemisms, conveying elitist assumptions about Western Europe operatic and symphonic traditions. This definition of superior culture marginalized ethnic and folk music and implied a social as well as music hierarchy.

In essence what was unleashed during the 1920s was a battle for the cultural sensibilities of the public. As other cultural historians have discussed, radio was but one of a series of communication technologies transforming the cultural and aural perceptions of the nation.[33] As agendas of the cultural elites and of the moral traditionalists collided with new forms of popular music, each group hoped to use the new radio technology for its own forms of aesthetic and moral uplift.[34] Such polarized predictions of radio's ubiquitous power to create or de-

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[31]"Should the Youth of America Be Exploited? A Brand of Communism Which Aims at Control of Junior Farm Centers," *Dearborn Independent* (September 6, 1924); "The Tribune Gets a Fast One," *Dearborn Independent* (August 16, 1924). Also see Wik "The Radio in Rural America," 339-50.

[32]Robert H. Schauffler, "Where Have I Heard That Tune Before?" *Collier's* 78 (July 3, 1926): 16-7; E.F. McDonald, Jr., "What We Think the Public Wants," *Radio Broadcast* 4 (March 1924): 382-4.

[33]See Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society In the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973); Catherine L. Covert, "We May Hear Too Much": American Sensibility and the Response to Radio, 1919-1924," in Covert and John D. Stevens, eds. *Mass Media Between the Wars: Perception of Cultural Tension, 1918-1941* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1984); Mary S. Mander, "Utopian Dimension in the Public Debate on Broadcasting in the Twenties," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 12 (Summer 1988): 71-88.

[34]Biocca, "Early Radio and the Clash of Musical Cultures," 1.

[35]David M. Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Aboundance and the American Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954) and Stuart Ewen, *Captains of consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976).

stroy American culture can perhaps be better understood as an expression of the larger social and cultural conflicts of a society struggling to adapt to the rapid changes brought about by industrialization, urbanization, and modernization. Following some fifty years of rapid industrialization, America had become a society of abundance, with consumer goods being available to and enjoyed by more Americans than ever before in the nation's history. National prosperity elevated business and material values to new prominence in a decade popularly portrayed as the day of the flapper, flask, and frivolity.[35]

The 1920s was also a period of intense social conflict and unparalleled public intolerance. Events after the war, particularly the rash of labor strikes, race riots, and the Red Scare, left a lingering fear in many white middle-class Americans that foreigners, blacks, radicals, and reformers of peaceful persuasion threatened to tear apart white, middle-class, Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture and society. Rapid postwar industrialization brought not only prosperity and increased consumerism, but also heavy unemployment, unequal distribution of income, urbanization, and new consumer values that in many cases challenged traditional notions of appropriate behavior and definitions of community. Americans in all walks of life felt the stress of social dislocation and cultural disruption: rural people moved into cities; Southern and Eastern Europeans immigrated to the United States; blacks migrated North into previously all-white neighborhoods; Catholics and Jews ran for public office, and women entered the workforce.[36] Radio brought many of these new and controversial lifestyles and ideas right into the home.

While many Americans welcomed these changes as signs of progress, other feared that the country had gone too far. Many sought to resist by joining or lending support to such groups as the Ku Klux Klan, immigration restrictionists, religious fundamentalists, and other self-proclaimed champions of morality in an effort to return America to what they romanticized to be the more stable, wholesome days of rural nineteenth-century America.[37]

Caught between a fading old cultural and social order and an emerging but not yet fully identifiable new one, Americans of the 1920s expressed a particularly sharpened concern for the relationship between communication and culture. The new technologies of public communication seemed to promise a way to hold together a society that seemed to be quickly coming apart. Writer Wademar Kaempffert captured the anxiety of such growing concern when he wrote that the nation "had become disconnected." The "United States" had become he wrote, a nation separated by time and space with "only an idea of 'our country'" holding

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[36]Paul L. Murphy, "Sources and Nature of Intolerance in the 1920's," *Journal of American History* 51 (June 1964): 6-76; John Higham,*Stranger in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism* (New York: Athenaeum, 1966); William M. Tuttle Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Athenaeum,1970).

[37]William E. Leuchtenburg, *The Perils of Prosperity 1914-32* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Ellis W. Hawley, *The Great War and the Search for a Modern Order: A History of the American People and Their Institutions, 1917-1933* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979); Norman Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954); Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967); Don S. Kirschner, *City and Country: Rural Responses to Urbanization in the 1920s* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970).

together its some 106 million inhabitants.[38] Although diverse groups sought to use radio to impose social and cultural order, they did not share a vision of that ideal social and cultural order. At best, their call for unity was a call for standardization coming from those who were becoming increasingly aware that all Americans were not alike — but wanted them to be. Many looked to radio to solve their social problems outside of history and politics, without major economic or social restructuring.

It was during the late 1920s, as radio moved from craze to consequence, from expansion to consolidation, that "entertainment" emerged as a commercial means of reconciling very different views of what radio should be. Entertainment was an idea promoted aggressively by network broadcasters and advertisers in an effort to impose their order on a chaotic industry. Initially the notion of radio advertising was generally opposed and the question of financing the new broadcast service was unresolved. By 1928, however, it was clear that radio would reap its profits not through "good-will" benefit of broadcasting or even the sale of radio receivers, but from the commercial sale of airtime. As previous studies have documented, several forces coalesced by the late 1920s to ensure an environment conducive to commercial interests: the improvement of radio technology; the enactment of the 1927 Federal Radio Act; the entrenchment of commercialism through advertising; and the creation of the NBC and CBS national networks. These events guaranteed a more rational, stable industry, particularly beneficial to sponsors interested in creating new national "mass" markets for their new consumer products. By 1930, more than six hundred local stations and two national radio networks were broadcasting to more than thirteen million radio homes, about 45 per cent of the total of American households, creating a new mass audience.[39]

When the commercial promise of radio swiveled toward advertising by the middle 1920s, the major industry forces quickly saw they would have to kick the educational and other non-commercial squatters off the valuable spectrum spaces which they occupied. In the process, public space created in radio would be collapsed in order to expand the technology's commercial applications. The creation of the Federal Radio Commission in 1927 functioned not only to set engineering standards for a radio industry in chaos (the conventional portrait), but to smooth the way for commercial radio which gained at the expense of alternative definitions provided most often by smaller noncommercial stations.[40] Ironically, by the end of the decade, press commentaries associated educational, religious, and cultural uses of broadcasting with "special interests" and "entertainment" with a

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[38]Kaempffert, "Social Destiny of Radio," 764-72. Also see Warren Susman, *Culture and Commitment* (New York: Braziller, 1973).

[39]Robert W. McChesney, "The Battle for the U.S. Airwaves, 1928-1935," *Journal of Communication* 40 (Autumn 1990): 29-57; John W. Spaulding, "1928: Radio Becomes A Mass Advertising Medium," *Journal of Broadcasting* 8 (Winter 1963-64): 31-44; Donald G. Godfrey, "The 1927 Radio Act: People and Politics," *Journalism History* 4 (Autumn 1977): 74-8; Louise Benjamin, "Birth of a Network's 'Conscience': The NBC Advisory Council, 1927," *Journalism Quarterly* 66 (Autumn 1989), 587-90, and Eric Barnouw, *The Sponsor: Notes on a Modern Potentate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

[40]It is estimated that by the mid-1930s some 97% of the total nighttime broadcasting, when smaller stations were not licensed to broadcast, was conducted by NBC, CBS or their affiliates; see William Boddy, *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 36. Also see Christopher Sterling, *Electronic Media: A Guide to Trends in Broadcasting and Newer Technology 1920-1983* (New York: Praeger, 1984).

democratic form that everyone wanted.

The newly formed national radio networks chose businessmen with an entertainment philosophy for their first presidents. NBC chose Merlin Aylesworth, who had served as manager of the National Electric Power and Light Association, a trade association involved in a questionable propaganda campaign to undermine public ownership of utilities. Not surprisingly, Aylesworth asserted that radio was a "primarily entertainment medium" that "serves the industrial life of the nation as a powerful agency for the distribution of industrial messages." This changing cultural definition of radio converged with attempts to horizontally integrate the music industry. NBC's parent company, RCA, was moving further into the entertainment business, acquiring Victor Talking Machine Company and six hundred theaters from the Keith-Albee-Orpheum vaudeville chain. By 1931, the NBC Artist Bureau received $10 million from booking its own recording artists.[41] William S. Paley, at age 27, took over as CBS's president in September 1928. Entering broadcasting from Wharton School of Finance, family cigar company and advertising background, Paley promoted big-name dance bands, popular singing stars, and other novelty talents provided by CBS's partners, the Columbia Phonograph Company and Paramount Pictures. Paley defined radio as "an integral part of the entertainment industry." Network programs were entertainment, not of any greater "cultural merit... than a very good vaudeville show... nor indeed are they intended to uplift anything but the good spirits of the listeners to whom they are tuned."[42]

Although the broadcasting industry would not be dominated by commercial networks and advertising agencies until the 1930s, the concept of mass entertainment pervaded cultural thinking about radio's "real use" by the end of the 1920s. Amid press announcements of "high quality" programs on the debut NBC network, the slight edge classical music held in the very beginning of 1926-27 season increasingly gave way to the creation of what Daniel Czitrom has called a new hybrid strain of culture.[43] Where classical music and country music supporters had hoped to extend their culture and value systems to larger audiences through existing musical traditions, network advertisers and broadcasters promoted consumer and business values through variety programs. "The Maxwell House Hour," "The General Motors Family Party" and "The Palmolive Hour" juxtaposed classical music, country music, gospel, popular tunes, and comedy to create a format that promised something for everyone. It is this hybrid culture that has come to be known simply as entertainment.

While entertainment was reorganizing concepts about radio's content, it was also reorganizing the concept of the audience. Radio broadcasting presented the possibility of assembling a mass audience larger than that offered by existing venues even as it threatened to "water down" and use up existing forms of culture

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[41]Merlin H. Aylesworth, "National Broadcasting," in Martin Codel, ed., *Radio and Its Future* (New York: Harper & Brother, 1930; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1971), 32-7; "Radio Accomplishment," *Century* 118 (June 1929): 214-21; and Bruce Barton, "There Will always Be Something New To Do," *American Magazine* 104 (August 1927): 16-7.

[42] William S. Paley, "Radio and Entertainment," in Codel, ed., *Radio and Its Future*, 61-7 and his "Radio and the Humanities," *Annals of the American Academy of Social and Political Sciences* (1935): 94-103. Robert Metz, *Reflections in a Bloodshot Eye* (New York: New American Library, 1975), 10.

[43]Czitrom, *Media and the American Mind.*

in the very process of spreading those forms to larger numbers of people. Thus, talk about radio is talk about group life: the social construction of the audience wherein people are imagined in market terms.

Entertainment allowed the radio industry and the nation to avoid genuine conflict embedded in modern social relations. Critics' objections were not just to content but to the relationships implied by entertainment. At issue were whose voices would be amplified, silenced, or marginalized. Radio, it was argued, would bring different groups together, promoting cultural homogeneity, blurring diversity, and legitimizing values consistent with consumer capitalism. Entertainment, assumed to be natural and non-problematic, became a term of unity for a leisure society.

It was neither given nor historically inevitable that radio would be developed as a mass entertainment medium. If this monolithic definition of broadcasting dominates current thinking, it may be because we forget that there were — and are — other possibilities for using communication technologies. The U.S. system of broadcasting was developed in the 1920s amidst complex and contradictory visions of how radio should be used, what constituted "culture," and how society should be structured and by whom. Implicit in these definitions were, of course, differing opinions of audience taste and intelligence as well as underlying issues of power. In essence, what critics glorified or abhorred about radio was related to their ideological positions on modern, urban, industrial, consumer society, and to their desire to control the rapid social and cultural changes taking place in the United States. As the United States moves into the Twenty First Century amidst another wave of immense demographic and technological change, we would do well to expand our thinking about how and for whom new communication technologies should be used.

Books and Radio: Culture and Technology in the 1920s and 1930s

Ann Haugland*

In 1922, radio broadcasting swept the United States as a "fever, tearing through the population, inflaming all in its path" (Douglas 1987, xv). Although the technology of radio had been in use for some years as a means of communicating with ships at sea, and amateur operators had earlier discovered the thrill of transmitting their voices across vast spaces, widespread radio "mania" was a response to the first regular broadcast programs (Czitrom 1982, 71). The cult of the lone radio operator reaching across the miles to connect with another fan continued for some years, but an audience of people interested in the possibilities of radio broadcast for education and entertainment soon took precedence (Czitrom 1982, 74). First seen as nothing more than a marketing tool for selling radio receivers, broadcasting (as opposed to point-to-point communication) soon became the dominant form or practice of radio technology.

In contrast to the technology of the printing press, which was invented to duplicate manuscript books more quickly, radio broadcast did not develop to fill a specific need. As Raymond Williams writes, "it is not only that the supply of broadcasting facilities preceded the demand; it is that the means of communication preceded their content" (Williams 1975, 25). Content was developed to use (and sell) the technology—programs were created to fill the air waves created by the practice of radio broadcasting. Similarly, radio historian Susan Douglas argues that American radio broadcast was "invented," socially created. The form it finally took was not inevitable, but rather was the result of the actions of persons and institutions. Neither was the content of radio broadcast inevitable. Early broadcasters were looking for material with which to fill the air. Books were an obvious source for radio programming. But how books could be used on the air was not at all obvious.

Any new technology presents its users with both opportunities for welcome changes and threats to the status quo. The cultural practices associated with books could not remain the same in the face of another technology that purported to inform and entertain. In her study of the changing sensibilities and values connected with radio broadcasting, historian Catherine Covert claimed that the process of assimilating old forms and practices with new involves "moving back and forth between the two, accommodating one to the other, until finally a synthesis is achieved" (Covert 1984, 200). As radio broadcasting became a part of

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everyday life, the practices associated with the older medium of the book had to change.[1]

In the 1920s, the practice of book reading was in a peculiar position. Books had become more accessible, but at the same time they seemed to be a less significant part of everyday life. Robert and Helen Lynd found that in 1925 the Middletown public library contained fifteen times as many volumes as it had in 1890. But the reading circles and literary discussion groups that characterized Middletown life in 1890 had disappeared, and the local newspapers no longer carried book advertisements or literary notes. The Lynds concluded that although more people might skim a wide variety of printed material — including newspapers and magazines — fewer people devoted their evenings to reading. And reading aloud by the entire family had declined considerably. For many people, bridge, motion pictures, parties, or motoring seemed to be more popular entertainment than did books (Lynd 1929, 229-237).

This paper is an effort to explore how broadcasters and the people and institutions concerned with books—publishers, librarians, and those involved in a literary culture—worked out the ways that the book would interact with radio broadcasting. It suggests that the relationship or integration of an older cultural form—the book—and a new form—radio broadcasting—was shaped by larger cultural and economic forces and framed by underlying concerns about a rapidly changing society.

At the time that radio broadcast was gaining popularity, the United States was feverishly developing a consumption-based economy. Czitrom claims that the first broadcasters could be divided into three groups. Two of them—manufacturers of radio equipment and institutions such as department stores, hotels, or newspapers seeking publicity —were primarily concerned with increasing sales of products and services. The third group—religious and educational institutions—saw the potential of radio broadcast to inform, improve, and unite a disparate culture (Czitrom 1982, 72). The tension between those two potential uses of broadcasting shaped the interaction between the book and the radio.

The content of radio broadcast was also shaped by a tension about the value of culture—high culture—in a rapidly changing America. As Joli Jensen (1990) argues, discussions about the uses (and abuses) of the media mask deeper concerns about the society in which they exist. As broadcasters, publishers, librarians, and people who considered themselves part of an existing literary culture worked out the ways that books would be heard (or heard of) on radio, their discussions reveal much about the perceived role and status of old and new media technologies. But more interestingly, those discussions also reflect broader concerns about the position of high culture in a society enthralled with the popular culture that radio broadcasting provided. This paper explores the ways in which the development of new practices associated with two technologies were constrained and limited by underlying assumptions about cultural value.

In the following section, I trace discussions among publishers, librarians, broadcasters, and literary critics that appeared in print between 1922 and 1940. My purpose is not to catalog or summarize all responses, but rather to illustrate

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[1]In 1894, a fanciful article in *Scribners Magazine* (Vol XVI:26) called "The End of Books" claimed that printed paper books would become obsolete and be replaced by sound recordings of authors reading their works.

a range of hopes, fears, and creative possibilities posed by the interaction of the book with radio broadcasting among the groups most directly concerned. Those groups obviously had somewhat different concerns about what radio broadcasting might do for —or to— books. While those differing concerns are apparent in the material presented here, by the end of the period, I found a surprising, yet perhaps inevitable, coherence among those various interests. In the final section I place those discussions in the context of broader cultural issues.[2]

Books Meet Radio

On 25 March 1922, *Publishers Weekly,* the trade magazine of the book industry, announced what might be one of the first multi-media package deals: Harper and Brothers had agreed with the Radio Corporation of America on weekly broadcasts of its series of *Bubble Books*. The author of the *Bubble Books* would read the books and play the phonograph records that accompanied them. The broadcast, which would reach an estimated 3,000-4,000 homes, was expected to "benefit this already popular series, but it should also stimulate children's interest in books generally," thus setting a pattern for what the book industry hoped would be a mutually beneficial relationship between the book and the radio.

The book industry's understanding of that relationship was spelled out in several editorials in 1922, the year that "radio fever" was sweeping the country. Publishers were neither immune from nor frightened by that fever and in fact took great pains to dispute what must have seemed a very real fear—that the radio was a threat to the book. Their optimistic response to radio broadcast took several forms. First, "radio fever" had created a great demand for books about the new technology. And the book trade was ready to "play its part, as usual, in putting information at the disposal of all" (*PW*, 8 April 22, 1031). (Several weeks later *Publishers Weekly* supplied its readers with a list of books about the radio, as evidence of growing interest in books about business and technology [*PW*, 13 May 22, 1312].)

Second, the radio was seen as an ally in combating what apparently *was* a threat to reading—the movement away from the home as a center of entertainment.

> Any movement that brings the family together in the evening is to the advantage and not disadvantage of the writers and distributors of books. Home libraries will thrive when the home is most constantly used by the whole fam-

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[2]When I first became interested in the uses of books on the radio several years ago, I could find little scholarship on this topic and began by checking the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* for 1922-1940 under the subject headings for "Radio" and "Books and Reading" to identify material that explored the relationship between the two media. I was most interested in finding discussions that reflected the views of several groups I considered important: publishers, librarians, publishers and those concerned with literary culture. Since then, I have come across other work, most notably Joan Shelley Rubin's book, *The Making of Middlebrow Culture,* a wonderfully rich and thought-provoking study of the relationships between high and popular culture in the first half of the twentieth century. As part of her study Rubin surveys the book review programs on the radio and places them in the context of her larger goal of charting the growth of new "middlebrow" institutions. Although many of our sources are the same, my interest in the status of the book as a medium when faced with the new medium of radio broadcasting lead me in somewhat different directions and I have not duplicated Rubin's thorough discussion of the phenomenon of radio reviewing.

ily (*PW*, 8 April 22, 1031).

A few weeks later, that theme was reiterated and expanded upon.

> It is at home that reading is done and not at the theaters, restaurants or concert auditoriums.... Not that a person would be listening to a program and reading a book at the same time, but it would be a mad devotee, indeed, who would spend two or three hours listening in and so have not time left in which to read (*PW* 13 May 22, 1321).

Obviously the editorial writer underestimated the appeal that "listening in" would come to have, but the enthusiasm with which the publishers greeted the new "speech on wings" did not diminish.

Publishers then focused on the third and perhaps most exciting aspect of what they hoped would be a mutually beneficial relationship: the need of the radio broadcasters for programs and the need of the book industry for publicity. That same editorial noted that in fear of lost ticket sales many theater owners had stipulated that their stars not appear on radio. Book publishers, the editorial claimed, "must logically have a very different reply." In addition to keeping the family at home, the radio could also do good "in a secondary way, in giving publicity to authors whose names might not be known to all of those within the listening radius." The editorial concluded:

> It seems apparent that as long as the broadcasting stations are well conducted they will have support from publishers, book-trade and authors. The latter certainly have everything to gain in having their names become a familiar household sound (*PW* 13 May 22, 1321).

This emphasis on the potential advantage to the author may have been an attempt to diffuse the troublesome issues of copyright and royalties for broadcast that caused a serious rift between musical composers and performers and broadcasting companies.

The copyright problem (although mostly confined to music publishers) made broadcasters somewhat less optimistic about cooperation. An editorial in an early issue of *Radio Broadcast*, a magazine for radio fans, which also functioned as a trade magazine to the growing industry, accused the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers of being unreasonable in its demand that broadcasters either pay royalties or stop broadcasting copyrighted material.

> The path of the broadcast station manager is beset with difficulties—whenever he turns for material he finds the counsel of some body or other confronting him, with bills for royalties in one hand and an injunction in the other. In the meantime, the public, the real beneficiaries, get it all for nothing (*RB*, July 1923, 181).

The broadcasters clearly saw the money-making power they could deliver to other media if only given the chance to do so. They warned that these demands for payment for the use of material were "very much like killing the goose which might someday lay golden eggs." (A 1926 *Radio Broadcast* commentary noted

that poetry reading was not common on the radio and suggested that publishers had failed to realize that in "radio lies their opportunity to clear their shelves of piles of dust gathering on 'slim volumes.' Bring on the Bards!" [*RB*, May 1926]. Radio could sell anything—even dull and dusty volumes of poetry.)

Librarians were interested in "selling" poetry in another sense and looked for ways that radio could help in the library's mission. In 1923, an editorial in *Radio Broadcast* commented on the common goals of librarians and broadcasters:

> Much of the radio broadcasting is instructive and entertaining; so it is with the books on the library shelves. Radio is ever improving the musical and literary tastes of thousands of listeners-in, who, having their interest aroused, may find increased pleasure from music or literature—and libraries can supply the latter.... The day is rapidly approaching when most of our homes will be radio-equipped. Bringing the farmer and the sheep herder and the mountaineer into intimate contact with the world's greatest exponents of culture must help to make a more cultured race. Is not such a culture one of the dispensations of the ideal library? (*RB*, November 1923, 6-7).

Librarians were also initially interested in another sort of relationship with radio—becoming broadcasters and receivers themselves. August Shearer, past president of the American Library Association wrote in *Radio Broadcast*:

> Where libraries have suitable auditoriums, it is possible that the libraries function should be broadened to provide for its clientele the things which the books cannot give—the spoken word and music, This is one of the effects that radio may have on existing institutions, and the library must be alive to its possibilities (Augustus Shearer, Past President of the American Library Association, quoted in *RB*, November 1923, 9).

Mr. Shearer, described as "keenly interested in the development of radio for the library and the library for radio," may have been unusually receptive to the possibilities of broadcast, but librarians generally seemed to have been eager to work with broadcasters as a way of expanding their influence.

Library Journal, the professional journal for librarians, reported that some libraries planned and carried out their own broadcast programs (mostly story hours and book reviews), while others furnished material and supplied speakers at the request of radio stations. The radio, "first regarded as one of the most formidable of the modern rivals with which the public library must contend for the attention of the American public in its leisure time," was now "enlisted as an ally" (*LJ*, 15 June 1924, 381).

The first responses to radio of the two institutions that would seem to have had most at stake in the survival of the book—the publishing industry and libraries— appears to have been hopeful about the possibilities that broadcasting might present. Many librarians saw radio programming as a powerful new force that could be harnessed for educational purposes. Radio would not replace or threaten books, but rather would be an alternative medium that could go places and reach people in a way that books could no. Nor were libraries unaware of the power of publicity. In 1924 *Library Journal* noted that the Newark Public Library had begun a "carefully planned program of propaganda toward use of the li-

brary" (*LJ*, 15 June 1924, 381).

Book publishers apparently could not imagine a world where books were not the most important form of communication. No invention could displace "the use of print as a means of communication from the past and a repository of wisdom of the present" (*PW*, 13 May 1922, 1321). But this statement does suggest that the book was seen as a specialized form of communication—communication through time and as a container of wisdom or knowledge. The radio was not a threat to either of those uses of the book. So, although the early statements of publishers and librarians begin from the assumption that the radio would be a threat to the book, they argued that radio could be an ally of the book (or at least of the people who had an interest in distributing books).

Broadcasters had a pragmatic interest in the book: if books were a good source of programs—especially free programs—broadcasters welcomed an interaction of books and radio. But they were skeptical about whether the old form was suitable to the new. A General Electric prize competition for radio scripts suggests that "those who have written short stories, books of fiction... successfully or *unsuccessfully* (emphasis added) may have the germ of a prize-winning radio drama" (*RB*, November 1923).

But perhaps the most honest expression of radio's interest in the old form of the book is the *Radio Broadcast* article, with photographs, explaining how to turn a bookcase into a radio cabinet. "For those who can spare one of their bookcase sections, this manner of installing the receiving set is worth considering" (*RB*, November 1923). The radio was quite literally making a permanent spot for itself in the American home, and if that meant shoving aside a few books, so be it.

Radio Books? A New Cultural Form?

Publishers and librarians may not have resisted the radio, but others concerned with the book as a literary medium did have misgivings about how radio might affect it. In 1925, an editorial in the *Saturday Review*, a new literary magazine, responded angrily to an experimental radio adaptation of a novel to radio. According to the editorial, the author of that radio novel had proposed that a generation

> harassed by the multitudinous demands of a complex civilization will find its leisure for reading, at least for light reading, constantly decreasing, and that it will perforce take its novels in the compressed form of a fifteen minute radio recital instead of a three hundred page book (*SR*, 26 December 1925, 441).

The editorial writer argued that only a novel stripped of "all but its story" can meet with the approval of an audience that is "bombarded with the latest jokes, the latest jazz, the latest news from the four corners of the union." And he concluded that "no worse turn could be done to literature than to have the novel become the perquisite of the radio."

The claim that radio would allow literature to return to the oral tradition was attacked on the grounds that the radio worked against the very nature of time on which the oral tradition depended. "The bard of early days lacked no leisure on the part of his audience to attend to his tale.... Can anyone conceive of such a result evolving from radio narration?"

Eleven years later another *Saturday Review* editorial argued precisely the opposite line. Far from threatening books and especially the novel, radio is "giving back to the human voice the telling of stories and narrating of events" (*SR*, 15 February 1936, 8). The radio will take over the task that the book took on only by default. It will "occupy those marginal areas into which books entered because the old race of bards and minstrels could no longer function in an expanded world." This narrowing of the field of books was a welcome return to the serious print culture that books had provided in the past and should provide again.

> In all probability the radio—pocket, auto, and library table—will eventually take over much, though by no means all, so-called light fiction... leaving the better books a freer field to attract good readers.

Radio broadcasting could provide stories, but a novel is not merely a story. "A novel is a highly complex erection of the intellect in which are woven strands of emotion and of thinking which only the leisure of writing can devise." Reading books should require substantial intellectual effort, an effort not required by radio entertainment.

The literary critics of the *Saturday Review* were not the only ones to speculate that the radio and the book lay on different sides of a cultural divide. In spite of heroic efforts on the part of educators, librarians, and others concerned with education, serious high culture (other than classical music) was seldom successful on the radio.

Radio Broadcast kept up a discussion of the high- vs low-brow conflict over radio programming and questioned whether radio could really be the means to the cultural education many assumed it would and should be. A listener wrote: "My radio is for entertainment and entertainment only." (*RB*, April 1927, 568). "If I wish to obtain information on any subject I prefer to look it up at my leisure in some authoritative work and do not want to have it thrust at me through the loudspeaker." The "Listener Point of View" column consistently took a stand against the radio as an educational medium.

> We have never emitted loud whoops and hurrahs in these columns concerning the educational potentialities of radio.... To educate, according to Mr. Webster, is to develop or discipline the mind by systematic instruction of training. This, radio is not likely to do (*RB*, June 1926, 134).

An editorial titled "Is the High Brow Entitled to a Program of His Own?" argued that although there ought to be room for a few "high brow" programs, radio "by rights, belongs to the unlettered" (*RB*, August 1928, 223).

> If all the books and pamphlets and periodicals that have been printed since Mr. Gutenberg invented moveable type back in 1456 were placed end to end they would stretch from New York to San Francisco and then some. And if they were placed in the order of their brow elevation, with *Weird Stories* and *Liberty* at the beginning of the stack and *Novuum Organum* or Mr. Einstein's book at the finish, it would be found that the lowbrow section would peter out somewhere around Elizabeth, N.J.... The printing press operators haven't really given a whoop for the masses.... So if now this new contraption, radio,

> decides to put its major effort on behalf of *hoi polloi* there can be no great cause for complaint (*RB*, August 1928, 223).

Any possible interpretation of this remarkable statement as a call for cultural democracy is undercut by an introductory comment on the very large potential market that the masses represent.

Discussions in *Radio Broadcast* suggest that radio programmers were aware that books had been used successfully for radio broadcast, most notably in Britain. Information about a BBC series based on Thomas Hardy novels was greeted with surprise, because "radio, in general, goes in for the lighter amusements." The commentary ended with a joking request that listeners send in their votes, "Hardy or a hog-calling contest" (*RB*, March 1927, 483). An article on the educational and literary possibilities of radio noted the striking contrast between American radio and the BBC, which "has probably gone as far in stressing these subjects too much as we have in relegating them to obscure hours" (*RB*, July 1929). But, the article argued, literary or educational programs "would not appeal to the national advertiser because there is no educational subject which interests a broad cross section of society, and serving only part of the audience well does not have the good will value of serving a large part in an insignificant way." Once the commercial basis of American broadcasting was in place, its role seemed clear: to present entertaining programs in order to assemble the largest possible audience for advertising — not to educate or to provide "art."

In 1935 a writer who had earlier prophesied that a new literary form would result from creative collaborations between books and radio admitted defeat. Early radio programmers assumed that a new medium meant a new art form.

> Radio Broadcasting would be a Super-Art, at once a servant and master of such recognized muses as Drama, Music, Literature, and the Cinema.

It would mold those older forms into "new harmonies of aesthetic appeal, and would bring them to the millions in its own right. Although the practitioners of the arts of music, drama, and cinema had found ways to collaborate with radio, literature had not.

> Broadcasters, writers, and publishers have all tried to find some effective alliance for radio and books.

Radio readings and adaptations of books had not been successful, at least not successful enough for broadcasters to continue them. Radio hasn't proved to be a "compatible mate for literature."

> It's queer, in a way. The stage and the movies, the opera and the concert hall, all regard radio as a box office enemy, but contribute willingly to its activities. And the book world, which has always regarded the radio with a friendly tolerance, seems to have no possibility of economic or artistic affiliation with it (*PW*, 12 January 1935, 127-8).

Neither the hoped for new art form nor the alliance for cultural education materialized. What remained was a hope that radio could somehow turn listeners into

readers.[3]

Encouraging Reading the Radio Way

In the 1930s, publishers, librarians, and others concerned with books and reading increasingly addressed the topic that publishers had identified in 1922 as the most important characteristic of radio—its unprecedented power to advertise and publicize. Beginning in the late 1920s, *Publishers Weekly* featured articles telling publishers and booksellers how they might use radio to promote specific titles, book shops, or book buying generally. In 1927, an Oregon bookseller addressed the American Booksellers Association on "Making the Radio Sell Books for You" (*PW*, 21 May 1927, 1985). He asked "what type of advertising will force people to use their minds in such a way as to create a desire for books?" He argued that after hearing the radio book talk people are "completely 'sold' when they see the actual book before them."

A *Publishers Weekly* editorial in 1930 stressed the power of radio to reach people who would not ordinarily read about books. "The newspapers may carry literary supplements to millions of people, but a newspaper cannot turn itself, sheet by sheet" (*PW*, 17 May 1930, 2522). The crucial element of a good radio book talk was to complete the sales cycle by directing the listener to a place where he or she can buy the book. "It is practically useless to create interest in a book unless the interest is immediately capitalized by sending the customer to a definite store where he may see the object of his steadily ebbing desire."

The completed sales cycle was the goal of the well-coordinated effort that surrounded a new national book program hosted by Alexander Woollcott. Sponsored by the American Book Binding Company, backed by ten publishers, the program provided participating book stores with posters advertising the books to be reviewed. The booksellers received advance notice of each program so that they might order sufficient stock. The American Book Binding Company also printed "Book Chat," a booklet of "interesting and personal material about authors" (*PW*, 13 September 1930, 1039).

This sort of publicity or "indirect" advertising, as the publishers called it, in which a radio personality rather than the publisher reviewed books or interviewed authors, seemed to be the most popular promotional method. In 1929, the "pioneer of book broadcast," Joseph Henry Jackson, who had a long-running book review program on the West Coast, argued that publishers could not sponsor their own book broadcasts—which would look like advertising—because books were not like other commodities. Book buyers did not trust their own judgment to evaluate book ads.

> Your householder, your housewife, can judge a car or a brand of washing soap. They feel able to judge such things adequately by standards by which they can measure and compare and eventually buy. But nine hundred and ninety

[3] The most serious consideration I found of the possible uses of books in radio broadcasting appeared in Britain in 1936. In "The Exploitation of Books by Broadcasting and Talking Machines" (*The Author* 47:1) publisher Geoffrey Faber explored the experience of reading aloud and from the point of view of one concerned with the survival of the medium of the book. I found no such discussion in American media, where, as Faber points out, the uses of books on radio were confined to advertising and a limited amount of literary criticism.

> nine out of a thousand can't do that with a book. They haven't the special experience, in this case, out of which standards are built.... They know they haven't got it; they know they aren't completely competent to judge books and consequently they look for guidance (*PW*, 27 April 1929, 2004).

As this rather astute statement makes clear, in the 1920s Americans were learning to consume, but books as cultural commodities had a special status that provoked considerable anxiety. Potential readers looked for experts to tell them which books to read. Publishers, librarians, and literary critics were happy to respond.[4]

Sometimes that direction or guidance was evaluation of the book itself, but book gossip or personal anecdotes also worked. When the literary editor of the New York *World* began the first nationwide book program, he claimed:

> I am going to apply the methods of modern journalism to my talks over the radio. I shall try to keep dry analytical comment out of the talk and deal with live ideas and picturesque personalities. The radio is not the place for theorizing, but it can present useful information about books, authors, and literary life (*PW*, 17 May 1930, 2536).

Information about books and book personalities, more so than radio productions based on book content, became a staple of radio programming. *Library Journal* contained frequent notices about using library book talks and book reviews to encourage listeners to read. Some libraries even worked with local book stores to coordinate lists of recommended books (*LJ*, 15 June 1924, 582).

Like publishers and booksellers, librarians were concerned that the radio review or reading not be a substitute for the book itself. A note from a listener who said she had enjoyed the review and would not now have to read the book caused a librarian to argue for more care to be taken in the nature of the review. "They should pique the curiosity of the listener and lead to a desire to read the book rather than satisfy him fully" (*LJ*, 15 June 1927, 631). An article on "Hints for Library Programs" noted that "book review broadcasting must seek to stimulate reading of the books mentioned and other books of related interest, rather than merely to entertain or to satisfy the reader" *(LJ*, 15 October 1935, 795).

For example, the "Book Theatre" sponsored by the Boston Public Library and the "Treasures Next Door" series of the Office of Education both chose to broadcast small sections of books. These "teasers" were carefully designed to take the listener to a high point in the narration then stop, in order to encourage book borrowing or buying (Lazarsfeld 1940, 286). In other words, book promotion was the goal, rather than a creative radio presentation of a literary work.

A *Saturday Review* editorial argued that while serialization of a literary work on the radio might take away sales "there is always the excerpt and the complete but brief composition to serve as an introduction" (*SR*, 29 August 1931, 81). The radio could serve to "mobilize readers" in an audience that is not reached by the newspaper or a "sophisticated journal," and which is "wider even than that of the *Saturday Evening Post*."

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[4]Joan Shelley Rubin's *The Making of Middlebrow Culture* documents the efforts of book review editors, literary critics, and othersz to guide Americans in their search for culture.

Books could also be linked to other radio programming. The *Library Journal* article "Hints for Library Programs" suggested selecting books for review on the basis of current events. "Relevancy is our cue and the news item our most promising point of departure." The news item might be an author tour or literary prize, gossip furnished by publishers, or an event that suggested certain books. Librarians were encouraged to offer lists of books, refer to books reviewed in the past, and build up "a supposed knowledge of books on the part of the listener and at the same time telling him how to acquire this familiarity" (*LJ*, 15 October 1935, 796). Similarly, publishers were encouraged to think beyond the book review programs and tie promotion to the whole range of programming, for example, biographies of musicians who were heard regularly on the radio (*PW*, 16 May 1931, 2419).

In the end, the encounter between the radio and the book in the United States was not complicated, nor was it particularly interesting. There were few artistic collaborations between the book and radio, and the use of books in radio education did not live up to original optimistic expectations.

In 1939, the American Library Association inserted a message in the popular program "Lum and Abner." In their Arkansas dialect, the characters discuss books and bookmobiles (*PW*, 27 May 1939, 1921; Lazarsfeld 1940, 326-7)).

> Abner: They bring the truck right around to the door, huh?
>
> Lum: Yea, hit's jist like a library sept it gives folks like us that lives in small towns and the country and don't have 'em a chance to read good books.
>
> Abner: I doggies, I'll have to tell Pearl about that... She does love to read books.

If nothing else, radio broadcasts could remind people of the existence of books, any books. For those concerned with books generally—publishers and librarians—that perhaps was all they could hope for. And perhaps broadcasters now thought they had the best of both worlds — hog-calling and books in the same program.

The Status of Books in a Radio Age

This paper began with several questions about the relationship between old and new media. How did radio broadcasters make use of books? How did the appearance of radio broadcasting change the status of the book? Of course the book did not become obsolete, nor did it confine itself to only serious pursuits and leave to radio all popular entertainment and discussions of current events, as the editors of the *Saturday Review* had hoped. The relationship that developed between the book and the radio is perhaps best understood in terms of what Andrew Wernick calls "promotional culture." He argues that "North American culture has come to present itself as an endless series of promotional messages" (Wernick 1988, 18). Promotional culture is not merely the inescapable ever-present advertising that surrounds us, but rather the emergence of an "all-pervasive configuration" that extends into all aspects of social life.

Although Wernick's work is based on analysis of contemporary culture, "promotion" is a particularly apt description of the early book/radio interaction. Publishers were suspicious of the suggestions of advertising experts that they

"tell their story in a large way to the entire mass of the people, just as other industries are selling products and services for the buyer's leisure time (*PW*, 17 May 1930, 2524). An editorial called "Books are Different" argued that direct advertising might not be the most effective method of book promotion.

> Books, unlike most other merchandise, need to be presented not only by paid advertising but selectively by reviewers... so readers may have some guide to the enormous and varied output of each publishing season (*PW*, 5 August 1933, 351).

The most effective way to sell books therefore was to turn book advertising into a radio program itself, an example of "promotional culture."

The American book industry, from at least as early as the 1890s, had a national market and a conscious program for creating bestsellers (Ohmann 1981, 88). Although the promotion of books took a different form from advertisements for soap or soup, publishers no less than other manufacturers saw the power of radio to expand and solidify their markets.

The early high hopes and experimental dreams of librarians, educators, and broadcasters for radio as a medium to extend and enrich the power of books disappeared. Once the contest over the structure of radio broadcasting was won by commercial interests of the growing consumption-based economy, the uses it would make of the book were only too obvious. The book programs found on radio in the 1920s and 1930s were a mix of commercial, educational, and cultural interests.

> English professors joined writers, critics, editors, bookstore proprietors, and self-styled literary authorities in an unprecedented effort to employ the spoken language in the service of the printed word (Rubin 1992, 276).

They spoke not to create a new form of radio books, but to promote both specific books and book reading generally. Their goal was to encourage people to maintain the habit of reading and buying books and in some cases to direct to them to what the editors of the *Saturday Review* called "real books." They therefore served the interests of publishers in increased sales, of librarians in encouraging reading, of literary critics in making known a literary book culture, and broadcasters in inexpensive content.

Through reviews, book excerpts and the presentation of book and author gossip, books became part of radio programming. Such integration is typical of a promotional culture. Different media industries—book publishers and the radio industry in this case—are joined in "a spreading system of inner references that converts the whole into a single promotional intertext." In this arrangement, "the presentation of an extract, chapter, or episode can double as both an ad and as first order programming.... culture industry gossip about itself comes to serves as a staple of its own entertainment fare" (Wernick 1988, 189-90). The incursion of the book into radio programs as literary gossip or through the provision of review copies or excerpts are examples of the first-order programming that doubles as advertising.

Those forms are also indicative of the changes in cultural production that characterize a mass medium like radio broadcasting. Production of the new so-called

mass media — cinema, and radio and television broadcasting — is organized differently from that of the older medium of the book (Williams 1982, 48-53). Whereas ideas for books typically originate with the author (and then must be sold to the publisher), ideas for radio programming typically come from within the media organization and reflect its interests. This had lead to a differentiation between what sociologists call creator-oriented culture and distributor (or consumer)-oriented culture (Gans 1974, Hirsch 1985). The ideas and styles that first appeared in book form were picked up and popularized through radio programming. One way to interpret the book/radio interaction is as a "working out" of this differentiation, which is, of course, ultimately an issue of high vs low or popular or mass culture.[5]

With the advent of radio broadcasting, the status of the medium of the book had to change, and those changes were cause for a great deal of anxiety about the future of books and reading. Rising levels of education exposed more people to the habit of reading, and publishers produced and sold more new book titles. Yet publishers, social scientists, librarians, and literary critics worried that not enough Americans were serious book readers.

Books: Their Place in a Democracy (Duffus 1930), the report of a study funded by the Carnegie Corporation, began from the premise that books held a relatively unimportant place in American life. The average American, the author claimed, bought two books and borrowed another two books a year. As a whole, the country spent 28 times as much on candy and 22 times as much on movies as it did on public libraries (Duffus 1930, 2-4).

But just what the role of the book ought to be was far from clear.

> There can be no doubt that on average Americans at present read too few books. That is, they would be leading a richer and more enjoyable life if they read more. But if we advocate an increase in the quantity of books read and an improvement in their quality, we must formulate some theory, however generalized, as to the proper place of reading in American life. That is, we must ask how reading would stand in an idealized pattern of American culture (209).

Duffus compared the book to the magazine and argued that "a magazine of high quality may outweigh in cultural importance half the books that are published" (213). But because books generally have a more serious purpose, the book market is

> the arena within which the cultural battles of each generation are fought. It is the ultimate clash of ideas, wise and foolish, social and anti-social.... The new movements in painting, sculpture, architecture, music, politics, and science go forward with a covering barrage of books (213).

In this sense, then, books were a crucial medium in American culture. They pro-

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[5] Later, during the 1950s and 60s, the influence of the mass media on high culture was intensely debated by culture critics, most notably Dwight Macdonald, who focused on the blurred boundaries that resulted in a destructive"Midcult" of pseudo art. As a watered down version of high culture, the popular radio book programs that purported to keep listeners "in the know" about literary matters would presumably qualify as Midcult.

vided both the means for serious intellectual discussion and a permanent record of its cultural achievements.

But Duffus also claimed that books could and should play another role in his "idealized pattern of American culture," one that recognizes the new ways of living that had emerged during the twenties.

> As civilization increases in complexity, our lives are more and more intertwined, one with another, whether we wish it or not.... We must rub elbows with our fellows on the lower planes of their lives and ours—on the streets, in trains, cars and subways, in clanging factories, in offices where everything more intimate than keeping a favorable balance between income and outgo has to be forgotten. It would be most unfortunate if we could not counteract the disagreeable effect of some of these contacts by having cultural contacts on a plane farther removed from the struggle for existence (216).

Radio, motion pictures, and phonographs provide those more rewarding social contacts, and books should too. "Solitary and unguided reading has its charms... but it is not characteristic of modern life" (216).

Duffus had little patience for people who complained about the phenomenon of bestsellers and argued that reading and talking about them is an important social activity, and one that fits with the pace of life in the twentieth century.

> With our life becoming more and more socialized, reading, too, must be socialized if it is to keep up. It must break down loneliness. It must induce an intelligent and beautiful kind of group-consciousness (217).

The book was slipping in the competition with other leisure pursuits, Duffus argued, for two reasons. First, authors, publishers, and librarians had not done enough research into the needs, abilities, and interests of readers. The book must be "adjusted to its probable readers, and adjusted on a surer basis of knowledge about those readers than now exists" (219). Second, Americans had not been "sold" on books.

> Every experiment in heretofore undeveloped territory seems to show that our people want books whenever they are made to realize what books have to offer them. They even want good books. But this want has not been crystallized into what the economists call an "effective demand" 12).

In other words, if the book were to maintain a vital place in American culture, its producers would have to pay more attention to the methods of modern business, as did the competing media of magazines, radio, and motion pictures.[6]

Not everyone concerned with the book's role agreed with this conclusion. A *Nation* review of *Books* argued that to follow that advice would be a mistake. "Whether Mr. Duffus knows it or not, his plea is essentially one for diluting and

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[6] *Economic Survey of the Book Industry* by O. H. Cheney and *What People Want to Read About: A Study of Group Interests and a Survey of Problems in Adult Reading* by Douglas Waples and Ralph W. Tyler, both published in 1931, addressed the problems of promotion and distribution and reader interests.

debasing literature. No artist can produce great work if he tries to adapt it to the ignorances and prejudices of an inferior audience" (*Nation*, 3 September 1930, 248). This writer echoed the fears of generations of critics who worried that the spread of literacy and the increasing availability of books would level the intellectual standards. Those concerned with encouraging book reading — any kind of book reading — seemed on a collision course with others who wanted to encourage only a certain kind of reading.

In 1934, the editors of the *Saturday Review* posed a question to their readers:

> Why is it so difficult to interest this immense reading public of ours in good books? Is it the magazine, the movies, the radio, its own nervous busyness? (*SR*, 1 Dec. 1934, 324).

Why is it, the editors asked, that the reading public — defined as those with education, money, and leisure enough to read — was "so easily content with the hors d'oeuvres, the cocktails, the soufflés, and the salads of reading." The real meal of good reading was not the movie magazines or an occasional bestseller, but rather classics of the past or the worthwhile contemporary works.

Readers answered with complaints about the unresponsive educational system, the money-oriented American character, and the poor quality of contemporary literature. One reader disputed the editors' assertion that book reading was on the decline, citing figures that showed an increase in library circulation. But that reader missed the point: the problem was not that people weren't reading, it was that they were not reading the right books (*SR*, 29 December 1934, 396+).

During the 1920s and 1930s book production increased, and book clubs, most notably the Book-of-the-Month Club, brought books a wider audience (Rubin 1993, 31). The anxiety about the status of books in a radio age seemed less about the survival of the medium of the book than about what those books ought to be. On the one hand, Duffus's argument that the people and institutions responsible for books need to make them more accessible to readers living in a new age was reflected in the American Library Association's "Lum and Abner" project, whose goal was to encourage book reading of any sort. In direct conflict was the desire of literary critics to enshrine the medium of the book as an essential component — or perhaps a last bastion — of high culture.

As Jolie Jensen argues, the media are convenient scapegoats for perceived failures or inadequacies of our culture, and public discussions of the appropriate role of the media inevitably express the tensions, ambivalence, and struggles that characterize it (Jensen 1990). The discussion that surrounded the interaction of the book and radio broadcasting reflects a growing tension over the status of the existing high culture. The medium of the book became a focus for that issue.

In the 1920s, when radio broadcasting began to take shape, American society had developed a distinct cultural hierarchy. By the turn of the century, institutions of cultural authority had begun to set the terms of appropriate artistic expression and experience, and a distinctive "high" culture emerged. Cultural forms that were widely shared were, by definition, low.

> Cultural space became more sharply defined, more circumscribed, and less flexible than it had been. Americans might sit together to watch the same films and athletic contests, but those who also desired to experience "legiti-

> mate" theater or hear "serious" music went to segregated temples devoted to "high" or "classical" culture (Levine 1988, 234)

Late in the nineteenth century, increased book production had made more books of all sorts available to more Americans. But literary critics of the time feared that this democratization of print would lead to a decline in literary standards and intervened with guides and reading lists to discourage people from reading the books they considered unworthy (Rubin 1992, 17-20). The advent of a mass medium such as radio broadcasting must have seemed another such threat to the guardians and protectors of high culture.

When the literary critics in the 1920s and 1930s deplored the reluctance of Americans to read good books they were in essence asserting the value of a high culture book tradition, a tradition that had to be distinguished from — and protected from — the increasing dominance of popular culture that radio broadcasting represented. As a mass medium—especially a mass medium with a commercial base—radio broadcasting was inevitably cast as a low art form. If radio "by rights, belongs to the unlettered" as the *Radio Broadcast* editorial claimed, it certainly could not be expected to be part of a literary book culture. As the editorial in the *Saturday Review* expressed it, radio could support book culture by taking over the task of providing popular entertainment thereby allowing books to return to more serious pursuits. Those "real books" presumably would be inaccessible to most radio listeners. Radio could not provide "real books," but it could talk about them (*SR*, 15 February 1936). The only way radio broadcasting could interact with literary culture was by promoting it—by bringing the chosen books to the attention of its enormous (by book standards) public.

In the end, the technology of radio broadcasting popularized and promoted the existing culture of the book, but it did not provide new forms of participation in it. The dominant form of the interaction between the book and radio broadcast — the radio book talk—reflected the culture that produced it. The concerns of the market took center stage, and it maintained and strengthened a distinction between high and low media forms.

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New York City's Municipal Broadcasting Experiment: WNYC, 1922-1940

Alan G. Stavitsky*

"It is my opinion that the municipality cannot do better in its plan of carrying to the people useful knowledge and healthful entertainment than to establish a broadcasting station." — Maurice E. Connolly, Queens Borough President, 1922[1]

The convergence of Progressive reform and an intriguing new technology — radio — brought forth an experiment in municipal broadcasting in New York City. The originators of municipal station WNYC foresaw radio as a means of extending city government, an instrument to educate, inform, and entertain the citizens. WNYC's emphasis contrasted with the educational model within which most of the rest of non-commercial radio evolved, and from which contemporary public radio developed. City officials conceived of WNYC as a municipal station, as opposed to an educational station or a commercial station. Because the municipal radio concept emerged in the early 1920s, before the medium's industrial structure was entrenched, an opportunity existed to develop an innovative model of broadcasting.

However, in practice, the station's leaders lacked the practical skills and vision needed to actualize the concept of municipal broadcasting. Further, WNYC was hampered by political and economic pressures, limiting its impact in New York City's civic life, and WNYC's program fare was indistinguishable from that of most U.S. urban public radio outlets. In 1996 city government sold WNYC-AM and FM to the nonprofit foundation that raised funds for the stations, ending New York's 72-year municipal broadcasting experiment.[2] This historical episode reflects the difficulty of utilizing electronic media to foster democratic processes and illuminates the chronic inability of noncommercial broadcasters to define their mission and play a central role on the U.S. airwaves.

This article will describe WNYC's origins and the early years of municipal

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[1]Maurice E. Connolly, *Letter to Board of Estimate and Apportionment*, City of New York, March 17, 1922. Records of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, Volume 43, Calendar #138, Entry #4289, Municipal Archives and Records Center, City of New York (hereafter cited as MARC).

[2]Jacqueline Conciatore, "Suddenly, a sense of great possibilities," *Current* (25 November 1996), 1, 10-11, 16; Steven Lee Myers, "New York, Signing Off, Says It Will Sell Radio and TV Stations," *New York Times*, 22 March 1995, B7. WNYC-FM began broadcasting in 1943. City officials sold WNYC-TV, which went on the air in 1962, to a commercial entity.

broadcasting, through 1940.[3] Concluding sections will assess the outcome of the municipal broadcasting experiment, and its implications.

Origins of WNYC

The rise of urban liberalism and the Progressive Movement were central to the creation of WNYC. During the period before radio emerged, New York City's political environment was in transition. The nature of the Tammany Hall political machine changed in the first two decades of the twentieth century.[4] Responding to the clamor for reform both from within and outside the machine, machine politicians supported policies to ameliorate the problems of the city's ethnic working classes. A concomitant trend was the emergence of the Progressive Movement after the turn of the century. A leading chronicler of the movement, Hofstadter, described Progressivism as "an attempt to develop the moral will, the intellectual insight, and the political and administrative agencies to remedy the accumulated evils and negligences of a period of industrial growth."[5] Progressive legislators in New York State, with the support of the city's machine politicians, built an impressive record of social welfare legislation between 1910 and 1920.[6]

Against this backdrop, radio emerged. With the potential to reach urban masses instantaneously, the new technology piqued the interest of Grover Whalen, New York City's Commissioner of Plant and Structures. A gregarious, self-promoting politician, nicknamed "Whalen the Magnificent" by local reporters, Whalen was known for his work in transit matters, such as lobbying for new bridges and tunnels to relieve the city's traffic congestion.[7] Whalen believed the nascent medium might improve the function of city government, especially the delivery of police and fire services, education, and information about the activities of city agencies.[8] Early in 1922 he approached Maurice E. Connolly, Queens Borough president, to suggest that Connolly ask the city's Board of Estimate and Apportionment to establish a city owned-and-operated broadcasting station.

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[3]The nature of WNYC's broadcast service, as with other noncommercial stations, changed with the onset of World War II. Stations modified their programming to provide war-related news, talks, public service announcements, as well as patriotic music. The increased emphasis upon news and information had significant implications for contemporary public radio. See Alan G. Stavitsky, "From Pedagogic to Public: The Development of U.S. Public Radio's Audience-Centered Strategies—WOSU, WHA, and WNYC, 1930-1987" (Doctoral Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1990), 177-79; "WNYC Says It Gives 48% Of Time To War," *New York Times*, 12 May 1942, 13.

[4]John D. Buenker, *Urban Liberalism and Progressive Reform* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 31-41.

[5]Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Movement, 1900-1915* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1963), 2-3.

[6]Buenker, 37-38; Joseph Huthmacher, *Senator Robert F. Wagner and the Rise of Urban Liberalism* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 24-40.

[7]Edward L. Bernays, *Biography of an Idea: Memoirs of Public Relations Counsel Edward L. Bernays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), 361-62; Grover Whalen, *Mr. New York* (New York: Putnam, 1955). Bernays noted that Whalen in 1923 considered running for the presidency, an idea he later dropped.

[8]Grover Whalen, Transcript of interview for Columbia University Oral History Research Project, 22 November 1950. Municipal Reference Library, City of New York (hereafter cited as MRL).

Connolly agreed and wrote a letter to the board, detailing radio's potential for transmitting information, instruction and entertainment "upon a vaster scale and therefore of a higher class than has heretofore been possible."[9] Further, Connolly suggested that "the public will be best served if this new field of activity be municipalized. No private corporation should be depended upon to develop...so important a function."[10] On 17 March 1922, the board adopted Connolly's resolution calling for appointment of a committee to study the issue.[11] The committee, appointed by Mayor John Hylan, was chaired by department-store owner Rodman Wanamaker and included Grover Whalen.[12] The study committee reported back on 2 May 1922 that "the importance of municipal broadcasting was so far-reaching, and its possibilities so limitless...the city would be derelict in its duty were it not to establish a Municipal Broadcasting Station."[13] On 2 June 1922 the board appropriated 50 thousand dollars for the purchase and installation of a broadcasting station to be located in the Manhattan Municipal Building; the Bureau of Municipal Broadcasting was situated within the Department of Plant and Structures, of which Whalen was commissioner.[14]

Meanwhile, as hundreds of stations took to the airwaves during the early 1920s, the question of how to finance the nascent medium took on urgency. An early forum for discourse was *Radio Broadcast* magazine. In its first issue, May 1922, the magazine offered three proposals for funding radio stations. "The most attractive one," according to *Radio Broadcast*, was "the endowment of a station by a public spirited citizen."[15] Another option was voluntary public contribution to a fund controlled by an elected board.[16] A third idea, which the magazine called "probably the most reasonable way," was municipal financing.[17] The editors pointed out that cities spent large sums of money annually putting on public lectures and concerts attended by relatively small audiences; larger numbers of people, the magazine reasoned, could be reached if the same events were broadcast.[18] It is interesting to note that New York City had already begun to study the issue of municipal financing by the time the magazine came out and that *Radio Broadcast*'s proposals did not include advertising as a means to finance the new medium.

The start of broadcasting on WNYC was delayed on several fronts, first by the

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[9]Connolly letter.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Department of Plant and Structures, City of New York, Report for the Year 1922, 142 (MRL).

[12]Wanamaker's appointment is significant in that he was a noted radio enthusiast. The family-owned stores in Philadelphia and New York were equipped with wireless telegraphy in 1911. It was at the New York store that David Sarnoff became famous for his telegraphy during the Titanic disaster in 1912. In March 1922 the Wanamaker store in Philadelphia obtained a broadcast license. Both stores later became known for sponsoring organ concerts. See Erik Barnouw, *A Tower in Babel. A History of Broadcasting in the United States to 1933* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 76-77, 100, 158.

[13]Department of Plant and Structures, 142.

[14]Ibid.

[15]"Radio Currents: An Editorial Interpretation," *Radio Broadcast* (May 1922), 3.

[16]Ibid., 3.

[17]Ibid., 4.

[18]Ironically, despite its call for municipal financing, *Radio Broadcast* would later attack WNYC for using taxpayers' money to provide New York City's mayor with an outlet for political "propaganda of the most biased sort," which was to become a frequent criticism of the station. See "Radio Currents," *Radio Broadcast* (January 1925), 475.

reluctance of the U.S. Department of Commerce to license a municipal station out of concern that city financing would be socialistic. Whalen discussed the need for the station with Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, who "had to be convinced."[19] Accordingly, Whalen stressed that the station would provide the city a means to inform its citizens of the activities of city agencies, for emergency police and fire information, and for educational uses. Once Hoover relented, AT&T declined to sell Whalen transmitter equipment nor provide telephone lines for remote broadcasts, instead urging the city to patronize WEAF, AT&T's "toll-broadcasting" station in New York City. Whalen's response was indignant: "The great City of New York subsidiary to a commercial company? Decidedly no![20] Whalen eventually was able to import a used transmitter from Brazil for WNYC's use.[21]

WNYC's First Decade of Broadcasting

WNYC began broadcasting on 8 July 1924, sharing a frequency with commercial station WMCA. Early programs featured speeches by the mayor; city agency department heads speaking about the role and budget of their agencies; and musical presentations by the Police Band, the Department of Street Cleaning Band, and local orchestras.[22] Station officials soon realized they needed to justify their existence by serving the civic needs of New Yorkers and by offering programs not available elsewhere. What distinguished WNYC from commercial stations in its first decade of operation was the presentation of three kinds of programs: civic education, such as lectures on the Municipal Reference Library and information about civil service; health information, including tips on child-rearing; and "police alarms," which were requests for information on missing persons, criminal suspects and stolen cars.[23] In essence, WNYC functioned as a "bulletin board" for city government, featuring speeches by the mayor and other city officials, as well as accounts of public meetings.[24] This policy of service was formalized in 1930 when the city council passed legislation directing WNYC to operate "for the instruction, enlightenment, entertainment, recreation and welfare of the inhabitants of the City."[25] However, even the station's official history ac-

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[19]Whalen interview, 11.

[20]Lloyd Espenschied, Transcript of interview for Columbia University Oral History Research Project, 1963, 47 (MRL).

[21]Whalen interview, 8.

[22]"City Radio Plant Opened By Mayor," *New York Times*, 9 July 1924,7; "City Radio Station Found Abused For Political Ends, With Selfish Aims Supplanting Public Benefit," *New York Herald Tribune*, 13 May 1925, 8; "Hylan Opens City's $50,000 Radio Station," *New York Herald Tribune*, 9 July 1924, 13; Irving F. Luscombe, "WNYC: 1922-1940; The Early History of a Twentieth-Century Urban Service" (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 1968), 58-59. Luscombe's discussion of WNYC's early programs was drawn from a Works Progress Administration analysis of program logs no longer extant in the MRL. The WPA data were compiled by writers commissioned in the late 1930s to write a book on the history of radio in New York City. The book was never completed. See WPA Historical Records Survey, Box 3758 (MARC).

[23]Luscombe, 65; Seymour M. Siegel, "The Voice of New York City," *Rockaway Review* (June 1951): 55-56 (MRL); Rebecca B. Rankin, "A Radio Entrance," *Wilson Bulletin for Librarians* (May-June 1934): 527 (MRL).

[24]"Breakdown of Programs, October 1929," reprinted in Luscombe, appendix; Claudia J. Keenan, *WNYC* (New York: WNYC Foundation, 1985), 5.

[25]Local Law No. 5 of the City of New York for 1930 in relation to the establishment, operation

knowledged that "(d)uring WNYC's first ten years, its programs were generally quite dull, and the station lacked...creative leadership."[26]

During its early years the station also suffered from charges of political abuse of the airwaves, bearing out the concerns of some critics who initially objected to a municipal station on grounds that it could become a mayor's soapbox. Mayor John Hylan, believing that most of New York City's ten newspapers were biased against him, began the practice of reaching the public directly by making speeches over WNYC that railed against his enemies. An example came amid a conflict with Republican state legislators on a public transit matter. Hylan, a Democrat, went before the municipal station's microphone to attack "the mendacity of the corporation sycophants of the Republican party.... (T)he transit plank in the Republican state platform...represents the desperate eleventh-hour attempt of a discredited...crowd to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of the people whom they have betrayed shamefully and wantonly."[27]

Hylan's broadcasts became a contentious local political issue. An anti-Hylan newspaper, the *Herald Tribune*, responded with a four-part series in May 1925 criticizing WNYC as a "propaganda mill."[28]

The *New York Times* was more sanguine, noting that Hylan had done "what any Mayor would do with the same facility for defending and explaining his policies and achievements."[29] A good-government group, the Citizens Union, went to court, seeking to block the city from operating WNYC.[30] Failing that, the Citizens Union won an injunction stopping the mayor and members of his administration from using WNYC "for personal political purposes as distinguished from general city purposes."[31] Though later mayors such as Jimmy Walker and Fiorello LaGuardia would also come under criticism for making political speeches over WNYC,[32] station managers would adopt a cautious attitude regarding programming that might offend important constituencies.

Programming deficiencies and disputes were compounded by serious technical and regulatory difficulties. At a time when most New York stations had moved their transmitters to the meadows of New Jersey and Long Island, WNYC's transmitter adjoined its studios, atop the Municipal Building in lower Manhattan. As a result, engineers estimated that 80 percent of the station's 500-watt signal was absorbed by the building's steel structure, making it difficult to receive an audible WNYC signal throughout the City.[33] Further, a long-running dispute with a commercial competitor — WMCA, which coveted the municipal

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and maintenance of radio broadcasting station WNYC, 1930 Administrative Code, City of New York (MRL).

[26]Keenan, 5.

[27]Quoted in "WNYC Is Dedicated By Hylan To City 'Boosting,' But His Anvil Chorus Proves Its Chief Tune," *New York Herald Tribune*, 15 May 1925, 8.

[28]"Closing City Radio To Politics Is Advocated As Only Remedy For Misuse By Hylan Regime," *New York Herald Tribune*, 16 May 1925, 6.

[29]"Other Things Are Far More Serious," *New York Times*, 18 July 1925, 12.

[30]*Fletcher v. Hylan*, 211 NYS 397 (1925).

[31]*Fletcher v. Hylan*, 211 NYS 727 (1925).

[32]WNYC was also challenged for broadcasting the police and fire department's Holy Name Communion breakfasts. Two lawsuits claiming the broadcasts violated Constitutional separation of church and state were dismissed by judges. See *Ford v. Walker*, 229 App. Div. 775 (1930); *Lewis v. LaGuardia*, 282 NY 757 (1939).

[33]Luscombe, 148.

station's frequency and evening broadcast allocation — culminated in a Federal Radio Commission (FRC) order in 1933 restricting WNYC to daytime broadcasting only.[34] When Fiorello H. LaGuardia took office as mayor of New York City on 1 January 1934, he promptly snubbed WNYC by delivering his inaugural address from the studios of NBC.[35] With the city in a Depression-era fiscal crisis and LaGuardia pledging to eliminate city departments,[36] rumors circulated that the municipal radio station would be closed or sold to private owners.[37] Several local commercial stations, anticipating WNYC's demise, petitioned the FRC for expanded broadcast hours or a switch to WNYC's frequency.[38] The municipal station's future was further jeopardized in June 1934 when LaGuardia was angered by a broadcast that he considered commercial. Listening at his home to a program of Italian lectures and songs, the mayor was troubled by an announcer's frequent references to the program's sponsor, an Italian newspaper.[39] LaGuardia telephoned WNYC and was told that it was station policy to mention the names of program sponsors; WNYC had no budget to pay performers and offered on-air credit to sponsors that provided lecturers and entertainers.

The following day LaGuardia ordered the station to cease the practice: "I told them to make no more announcements that are nothing else but advertisements."[40] The mayor said he had considered closing the station, but decided to put WNYC "on probation" until the end of the year; if the station proved unable to produce educational and informative programming and to eliminate "commercial" broadcasts, it would be closed.[41] Two weeks later LaGuardia named three prominent local radio executives to examine and report on the "present status and future possibilities" of the municipal station.[42] The committee was chaired by Richard C. Patterson, Jr., executive vice president of NBC who was active in New York politics and had served as the city's Commissioner of Correction;[43] William S. Paley, president of the Columbia Broadcasting System; and Alfred J. McCosker, president of the Bamberger Broadcasting System, which operated WOR radio, who was also president of the National Association of Broadcasters.

Impact of the Patterson Committee

The committee issued its report on 25 October 1934.[44] Concluding that

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[34]For more on the WNYC-WMCA dispute, see *City of New York v. Federal Radio Commission*, 35 F2d 115 (1929); "Closing of WNYC Denied in N.Y.C." *Broadcasting* (15 January 1934): 14; Keenan, 5.

[35]Thomas Kessner, *Fiorello H. LaGuardia* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1989), 261.

[36]Ibid., 262-65.

[37]"Closing of WNYC Denied in N.Y.C." 14; "WNYC Status in Doubt," *Broadcasting* (1 February 1934): 12.

[38]Ibid., 14.

[39]"LaGuardia Bars Advertising on Station WNYC," *New York Herald Tribune*, 19 June 1934, 13; "Mayor Threatens to Stop City Radio," *New York Times*,19 June 1934, 21.

[40]"Mayor Threatens to Stop City Radio," 21.

[41]"LaGuardia Bars Advertising on Station WNYC," 13; "Mayor Threatens to Stop City Radio," 21.

[42]"3 Radio Men Named For WNYC Report," *New York Times*, 3 July 1934, 21.

[43]Kessner, 241.

[44]Report of the Mayor's Committee to Study the Present Status and Future Possibilities of Broadcasting Station WNYC (25 October 1934), 10 pp. (Document in MRL), hereafter referred to as

WNYC was in a "rundown condition," the report was critical of the station on numerous fronts.[45] The Patterson Committee, as it came to be known, pointed out to Mayor LaGuardia that some thirty radio stations operated within a thirty-mile radius of Manhattan in 1934, and that WNYC needed to be competitive in program quality and signal strength to attract listeners.[46] The Patterson Committee recommended: that the transmitter be relocated and modernized; that new studios be constructed with proper acoustics and ventilation; that additional personnel be hired, especially in an enhanced programming department that would include a staff orchestra, as well as a station publicist and a statistician to measure audiences; and that Local Law No. 5 be amended to allow WNYC to operate as a commercial station.[47] The committee estimated its plan to move WNYC to "first-class" commercial operation would cost $275,000.[48]

After studying the report, Mayor LaGuardia decided, albeit reluctantly, to continue operating WNYC as a noncommercial station.[49] "I think the members of the committee are right (about the rundown nature of the station), but I am going to play along with the equipment I have and try to build up the station," the mayor told reporters.[50] However, the prestige of the panel dictated that its report be taken seriously, and many of the Patterson Committee's recommendations were ultimately implemented.

The availability of New Deal funding from the federal government played a pivotal role. The municipal station drew employees from the Civil Works Administration, the National Youth Administration, and the Works Progress Administration.[51] Musicians were recruited to form a twenty-eight-piece studio orchestra in November 1934.[52] WNYC also added a publicist in 1934 and began issuing press releases promoting its programs.[53] In 1935 the station began publishing the *Masterwork Bulletin*, listing the musical selections to be played on WNYC's "Masterwork Hour" program of classical music, and providing a means of communicating with listeners.[54] Attempts at audience research were also initiated, during the period following the Patterson Committee report.[55]

Finally, the station's technical deficiencies were gradually addressed. The city received FCC approval to increase its effective radiated power to 1,000 watts in November 1934.[56] In 1937 new studios, sound-proofed and air-conditioned, were

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Patterson Report.

[45]Ibid., 9.

[46]Ibid., 4.

[47]Ibid., 6-8. For an account of WNYC's audience research activity during this period, see Alan G. Stavitsky, "Listening for Listeners: Educational Radio and Audience Research," *Journalism History* 19 (Spring 1993): 11-18.

[48]Patterson Report, 8.

[49]"WNYC Needs $275,000; Won't Get It, Says Mayor," *New York Herald Tribune*, 28 October 1934, 20; "WNYC To Continue At Mayor's Order," *New York Times*, 28 October 1934, 20.

[50]"WNYC To Continue At Mayor's Order," 20 (parenthetical information not in original).

[51]Luscombe, 162-67.

[52]"WNYC Range Widens Today," *New York Times*, 1 November 1934, 24.

[53]Miscellaneous titled/untitled WNYC publicity releases (between 1934 and 1939), WNYC file at MRL.

[54]*Masterwork Bulletin* (May/June 1935), Pamphlet in MRL.

[55]"Plan Study of WNYC's Fan Mail," (4 December 1936), news release in WNYC file (MRL); "WNYC Study of Radio and Music," (November 1939), Questionnaire in WNYC file (MRL).

[56]"WNYC Range Widens Today," 24.

built.[57] WNYC's signal strength improved considerably after the transmitter site was moved in 1937 across the East River to Brooklyn.[58] The WPA provided funds and construction workers to build the new transmitter.

The Rise and Fall of Public Affairs on the Air

The improvements prompted by the Patterson Committee ensured the survival of WNYC as a viable radio station. Its programming in the late 1930s was dominated by classical music — reflecting federal support for the station orchestra and LaGuardia's musical tastes — consumer-service programs presented by city agencies, and educational programs in conjunction with area universities.[59] The station's program schedule, however, lacked substantial discussion of public affairs. This reflected a timidity rooted in earlier conflicts over partisanship and the Patterson Committee's emphasis on a commercial broadcasting strategy of building audience through programs that entertained more than they "served."

Nonetheless, the station's assistant program director, Seymour Siegel, initiated a series of live broadcasts of government proceedings.[60] Siegel, the son of a U.S. congressman, brought WNYC microphones into the Coast Guard inquiry into the Morro Castle disaster; into hearings of congressional committees investigating un-American activities and patent practices; and even into a municipal traffic court.[61] In this manner Siegel pioneered the notion of live public affairs coverage that would later become common in public broadcasting and invigorated the municipal station. It was Siegel's decision in 1938 to broadcast meetings of the New York City Council that prompted the most celebrated episode in WNYC's early history.

Listening to the council broadcasts became a major source of entertainment for New Yorkers during 1938 and 1939; the polemics and bombast became so amusing at times that some citizens left their radios and went to City Hall to view the proceedings directly.[62] Listenership figures of unspecified origin announced by the station put the audience at one million.[63] In one widely reported incident, comedian Eddie Cantor sent a telegram to LaGuardia, offering to buy audio recordings of council meetings to use on his popular network radio program. Cantor said he reserved the right to "take out what I think is too funny."[64] Some

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[57]"A New 'Voice' for the City," *New York Times*, 24 October 1937, sec. XI, 14; "City's Radio Station Opens New Studios," *New York Times*, 25 October 1937, 4.

[58]"Station WNYC To Get Towers in Brooklyn," *New York Times*, 15 December 1935, 12.

[59]Consumer programs included information on food prices and menu suggestions from the Department of Markets, and venereal disease prevention tips from the Department of Health. See assorted publicity releases, August 1930, WNYC files (MRL).

[60]WNYC had previously carried news of city government meetings in the form of minutes broadcast after the fact.

[61]Luscombe, 168-74. For more background on Siegel, see Robert J. Blakely, *To Serve the Public Interest: Educational Broadcasting in the United States* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1979).

[62]August Heckscher, *When LaGuardia Was Mayor* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 259.

[63]WNYC was known to estimate audiences based upon the "assumption" that one letter received from a listener represented about 1,000 listeners. For its 1938 election coverage, the municipal station announced that one million people had tuned in, after receiving 1,000 letters. See untitled publicity releases (1939), WNYC file (MRL).

[64]Quoted in Keenan, 6-7.

council members became concerned about the public image of the body. As one councilman noted: "If the old Board of Aldermen had taken 135 years to make fools of themselves, the council had accomplished the same result in two years."[65] The council voted 13-7 to ban the WNYC broadcasts early in 1940. Though the *New York Times* editorialized that "the ban on the microphone is a step away from that searching glare of publicity which the unashamed lawmaker does not shun," the municipal station had again been censured for airing the public affairs of the municipality.[66]

WNYC would return to local prominence during World War II through LaGuardia's Sunday radio talks, which began in 1942.[67] The mayor's broadcasts stemmed from his desire to inform the city about the war effort but evolved into a wide-ranging, extemporaneous discussion of city affairs. During a newspaper strike in 1945, LaGuardia read the comics over the air, for which many New Yorkers best remember him. However, the municipal component of the WNYC schedule had become timorous. In later years the station became known primarily for classical music, gavel-to-gavel broadcasts of United Nations proceedings, university lectures, roundtable discussions, and occasional broadcast of a local public hearing. Municipal broadcasting, which had begun to flourish briefly in the late 1930s, faded, replaced by what would become known as public broadcasting.[68]

A Failed Experiment?

New York City was not alone among government entities in experimenting with radio.[69] Dallas, Texas, was the first municipality to operate a government-run station, putting WRR on the air late in 1921 to serve its police and fire departments. Chicago established WBU in 1922.[70] By 1927 the FRC had licensed fifteen radio stations to municipalities and other non-educational government agencies.[71] However, by 1934 only six such stations remained licensed,[72] and by 1938 the FCC reported there were just two.[73] Certainly these stations were sub-

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[65]Hart, quoted in "WNYC Broadcasts Banned By Council," *New York Times*, 17 January 1940, 21.

[66]"The Council Closes Its Door," *New York Times*, 18 January 1940, 22.

[67]"John R. Hutchens, "His Honor: Radio Showman," *New York Times Magazine*, 16 July 1944, 14,41; "Patience and fortitude," *New Yorker* (6 November 1943): 20-21; "Peanut whistle," *Newsweek* (18 July 1949): 44-45.

[68]Stavitsky, "From Pedagogic to Public," 67-87.

[69]It is interesting to note that Progressive politicians in several cities, including New York City, also experimented with municipally owned-and-operated newspapers, a number of which were established between 1908 and 1913. Most of the municipal newspapers soon disappeared, though some remain as vehicles for publishing legal notices.

[70]George H. Douglas, *The Early Days of Radio Broadcasting* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1987), 33.

[71]U S Department of Commerce, Radio Division, *Commercial and Govemment Radio Stations of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1927). In addition to ten municipal licensees, stations were operated by such entities as the Los Angeles County Forestry Department, the Pennsylvania State Police, the Maryland National Guard, the Wisconsin Department of Markets, and the Missouri State Marketing Bureau.

[72]Federal Radio Commission, *Radio Broadcast Stations in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1934).

[73]WNYC and WCAM, Camden, N.J. Federal Communications Commission, *Fourth Annual Report of the Federal Communications Commission* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office,

ject to the same pressures that forced many educational stations of the era off the air: a shortage of public funds during the Depression and the efforts of commercial stations to take over the frequency assignments and time allocations of educational stations.[74] However, if the WNYC example is emblematic, these stations may also have suffered from lack of vision.

For commercial radio stations, the objectives were clear — to entertain listeners and attract advertisers. What then was the purpose of a municipal station? WNYC's early managers conceived of the station broadly, as a way to extend the reach of city services, and specifically, to improve the function of the police department.[75] They were unable, however, to come up with programming that fulfilled this mission. Broadcasts of missing persons and mundane details of city agencies failed to attract an audience. As the Patterson Committee noted, New Yorkers generally found the station's civic programming to be tedious and its cultural programming less appealing than the entertainment provided by commercial stations. Further, the city's mayors viewed WNYC as a soapbox, which drew the station into the cauldron of local politics.

Station managers learned to avoid controversy during a period in which influential local politicians frequently called for WNYC's elimination.[76] Cultural programming, such as classical music and drama, was safe, as was radio education. Siegel became active in the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, even serving as NAEB president.[77] WNYC took on the "sound" of educational radio in the manner pioneered by the stations licensed to major Midwestern land-grant universities, such as Illinois, Ohio State, and Wisconsin. These stations generally presented lectures by university faculty, information programs for homemakers and farmers, broadcasts of university drama groups, and live and recorded classical music.[78]

Educational radio evolved into public radio with the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 and the creation of National Public Radio.[79] Accordingly, WNYC adapted in the same style as did many of the former educational stations, which commonly broadcast a mix of classical music or jazz, NPR news and public affairs programs, and local news and call-in shows.

The station's legacy of political interference by New York mayors continued. In 1979 Mayor Edward Koch directed WNYC to broadcast the so-called "John

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1939). By this time the Wisconsin Department of Markets station, WLBL, was simulcast with the University of Wisconsin's WHA, and was therefore considered educational.

[74]S.E. Frost, *Education's Own Stations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937); Werner J. Severin, "Commercial v. Non-commercial Radio during Broadcasting's Early Years," *Journal of Broadcasting* 22 (1978): 491-504.

[75]"City's Plant Tests Device For Radio Calls To One, Several Or All Police Stations," *New York Times*, 17 January 1925, 1.

[76]"Lyons, Over WNYC, Asks End Of WNYC," *New York Times*, 3 April 1939, 3; "O'Dwyer Assails Markets Policy," *New York Times*, 24 October 1941, 15; "WNYC Says It Gives 48% Of Time To War," *New York Times*, 12 May 1942, 13.

[77]Blakely, 7.

[78]For examples of educational station programming, see "Radio Broadcast Programs: 1922-1926," J.S. Penn papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; University Radio Committee Annual Reports from 1940s and 1950s, Harold Engel papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; WEAO Program Bulletins from 1920s and 1930s and WOSU Program Bulletins from 1940s and 1950s in WOSU files, Ohio State University Archives, Columbus.

[79]U.S. Congress, Public Law 90-129. See Robert K. Avery and Robert Pepper, "Balancing the equation: Public radio comes of age," *Public Telecommunications Review* 7 (1979): 19-30.

Hour" — actually two minutes of names of people charged with soliciting prostitutes, which was the subject of a police crackdown. Critics charged that the incident underscored anew the municipal station's vulnerability to political pressure.[80] In 1990 the station's long-time manager, a Koch appointee, was replaced by the press secretary of the new mayor, David Dinkins.[81] These periodic episodes notwithstanding, few apparent ties to the municipality existed at WNYC before its sale.

Discussion

Could WNYC have developed municipal broadcasting into a viable form, distinct from commercial or educational radio, and true to the Progressive ideals of its founders? The case of WCFL, the radio station of the Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL), may be instructive in considering this question. The CFL intended the station to promote the labor ideology and counter what it perceived as "anti-union propaganda" presented on commercial stations.[82] WCFL's managers sought to build a large audience by keeping the labor-related programs brief and by surrounding them with classical music, vaudeville comedy, dance hall music, foreign language programs to reach Chicago's immigrant population, and even broadcasts of Cubs and White Sox baseball games. However, as with WNYC, WCFL experienced political and economic pressures and the station's program fare eventually became indistinguishable from other local broadcasters; when the CFL sold WCFL to the Mutual Broadcasting System in the 1970s, the station was programming a rock music format with no labor-related programming.[83]

Several significant differences between WNYC and WCFL should be noted, including the labor station's commercial operation and avowed ideological stance. Nonetheless, the histories of these two stations illuminate the difficulty in implementing a vision for a model of broadcasting distinct from the commercial and educational/public paradigms.[84] This vision has at its heart a different conception of audience, of listeners as participants and subjects — rather than as *objects*, to be captured on behalf of advertisers as consumers or on behalf of public stations as contributors. Such a model emphasizes conceptions of the communication needs of a democracy — as perceived by Chicago's labor leaders, the pacifists who formed the network of Pacifica radio stations, or the Progressive politicians who started WNYC.[85]

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[80]Joyce Purnick, "A New Era At WNYC Spurs Debate On Influence Of Its Benefactors," *New York Times*, 20 December 1979, B1-2.

[81]Jack Robertiello, "Nichols, Aaron out at WNYC," *Current* (12 March 1990), 4, 17.

[82]Robert W. McChesney, "Labor and the Marketplace of Ideas: WCFL and the Battle for Labor Radio Broadcasting, 1927-1934," *Journalism Monographs* 134 (August 1992).

[83]Ibid., 31. Though the CFL intended for its members to subsidize the cost of running WCFL, the station was unable to meet its expenses and was forced to sell advertising.

[84]Alan G. Stavitsky, "Listening for Listeners: Educational Radio and Audience Research," *Journalism History* 19 (1993): 11-18; Stavitsky, "The Changing Conception of Localism in U.S. Public Radio," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 38 (1994): 19-34; Stavitsky, "'Guys in Suits with Charts': Audience Research in U.S. Public Radio," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 39 (1995): 177-89.

[85]For discussion of Pacifica's history and philosophy, see Peter M. Lewis and Jerry Booth, *The Invisible Medium: Public, Commercial and Community Radio* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1990), 115-18. For a comparison of Pacifica and NPR, see Alan G. Stavitsky and Timothy W. Gleason, "Alternative Things Considered: A Comparison of National Public Radio and

However, the civil servants who ran New York's municipal station did not know how to realize the amorphous vision of WNYC's founders. In the 1930s they adopted the slogan, "The Voice of the City," for the station. But WNYC was really the voice of city government, not the people of New York. The municipal station was generally unable to engage the citizenry, and when WNYC finally did so with the City Council broadcasts, it was condemned. What if WNYC had responded to the Hylan controversy by regularly making airtime available to competing political viewpoints, produced programs about the city's numerous immigrant groups instead of missing persons, and made its microphones available to city residents rather than just city officials? There was room for such an approach in the wide-open, experimental, early days of radio. Unfortunately, the station's managers lacked the sophistication and the politicians lacked the will to make the municipal station any more responsive to the people of New York City than to provide fine music, food prices and the police blotter.

This study thus illustrates the chronic search for purpose in U.S. public broadcasting. Aufderheide poses these questions in the context of public television: "is it to aid the democratic process...or to deliver the cultural cream? Is it to make public the voices of underrepresented minorities of a pluralist society? Is it to be 'quality' television or instead 'anti-television'?"[86] If public broadcasters continue to wrestle with these issues after more than seven decades of service, the failure of New York City's municipal broadcasting experiment is hardly surprising.

Pacifica Radio News Coverage," *Joumalism Quarterly* 71(1994): 775-86.

[86]Patricia Aufderheide, "Public Television and the Public Sphere," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 8 (1991): 168-83, 171.

The Social Origins of Broadcasting: Canada, 1919-1945

David Spencer*

A nation's broadcasting system mirrors its fundamental social, political and economic values as well as being a major player in legitimizing them. As belief systems evolve, moving along an ever flexible continuum of ideological perspectives, so does the character and thus the public expression of broadcasting. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Canada. Although it began as the result of private initiative, by the mid-1930s, Canadian broadcasting came under the control of the public sector. This remained unchanged until the late 1950s, when regulation was turned over to a government-appointed agency. The move encouraged massive growth in the private sector and many Canadians came to believe that it was only a matter of time before the public sector would disappear.

In spite of extensive privatization programs by all levels of government, public broadcasting has not withered away. In the past two decades it has continued to expand. Along with the national system, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, most provinces are now actively engaged in producing and transmitting television and some radio programming. As a consequence, both the public and private sectors have continued to co-exist, however uneasily, as members of a single broadcasting system. In every respect, the endless debates which have plagued Canadians regarding the role that broadcasting should play in this country, are part of a larger and seemingly unresolvable dialogue which has attempted to define the limits of power in the Canadian state itself. The origin of these issues can be traced to the day when Europeans first set ashore on the banks of the St. Lawrence River in the seventeenth century and established the North American version of French feudal society.

It would be tempting to begin this examination of the origins of broadcasting policy in Canada by reviewing the events which led to the creation of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission in 1932, Canada's first public broadcasting agency. To do so at this point would present little more than a summary of the existing scholarship, a short but comprehensive literature which has been characterized by its somewhat myopic focus on the major actors and their subsequent designations as "good guys" and "bad guys."[1] As valuable as these studies are,

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[1]For an overview of the literature, readers should consult the following studies. This list is by no means comprehensive. Albert Shea, *Broadcasting the Canadian Way* (Montréal, Québec: Harvest House, 1963); Don Jamieson, *The Troubled Air* (Fredericton, N.B., Brunswick Press, 1966); Frank W. Peers, *The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting 1920-1951* (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1969); Walter Emery, *National and International Systems of Broadcasting* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1969); E. S. Hallman, *Broadcasting in Canada* (Don

they fail to recognize that the development of Canadian broadcasting policy was influenced, and continues to be, to a significant degree by a widely-shared suspicion of liberal-democratic institutions in the minds of many Canadians. As well, the behavior of the Canadian newspaper industry and its early interest in establishing broadcasting stations along the commercial and mass entertainment lines which fostered its own growth, remains an untouched field of study.

Ideological Origins

The tendency to defer to powerful and sometimes autocratic leadership is a characteristic that can be found in both French and English Canadian society. This is precisely what Canadians did when they opted for a predominantly public system of broadcasting in 1932. To understand why this became the preferred alternative, we must take at least a cursory look at the political behavior which has dominated the country since Confederation. Until recent times, Canadian voters regularly returned well-established political characters to office for extended periods of time in both federal and provincial elections. Time and space does not permit a complete accounting of this practice, but a few examples are in order to bring clarity to the argument.

Until Brian Mulroney and the Progressive Conservative Party was returned for a second term in 1988, no Conservative government had been given a second majority since the party was removed from office in 1896 after exercising power for twenty-four of the twenty-nine years which followed the union of the provinces in 1867. The next century was to belong to the Liberal Party. Since 1921, that party has had only six leaders, of whom all but the current one has occupied the Prime Minister's chair.[2]

Provincial politics has proved no exception. Ontario's Progressive Conservative Party held office continually from 1943 until 1985.[3] Québec politics has been dominated by long reigns of power by le Parti Liberal du Québec which has been out of office only for an accumulative total of thirty years since 1897.[4] Alberta and British Columbia provide even more bizarre case studies. Albertans have elected four different parties since joining Confederation in 1905. Each party has been totally dominant until its defeat and has then sunk into oblivion. The province's first Liberal Party administration faced only two members on the opposition benches. In 1921, it was replaced by the United Farmers of Alberta which dominated until 1935 at which time the Social Credit Party took power. Its first administration had 57 members who faced a combined opposition of only 6 members.[5] The party, now virtually extinct, governed until 1972 when

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Mills, Ontario: General Publishing Company, 1977); Marc Raboy, *Missed Opportunities: The Story of Canada's Broadcasting Policy* (Montréal, Kingston, London, Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990); and Michael Nolan, *Foundations: Alan Plaunt and the Early Days of CBC Radio* (Montréal, Toronto, New York, London: CBC Enterprises, 1986).

[2]An analysis of the success of the federal Liberal Party has been documented in Reginald Whitaker, *The Government Party* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

[3]Although written a decade before the final demise, the most comprehensive explanation of the party's success can be found in Jonathan Manthorpe, *The Power and the Tories* (Toronto, Ontario: Macmillan of Canada, 1974).

[4]Vincent Lemieux, "Heaven is Blue and Hell Is Red," in Martin Robin, ed., *Canadian Provincial Politics* (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1972), 264.

[5]The anti-democratic nature of Alberta politics has been well documented in C.B. McPherson,

replaced by a Progressive Conservative administration. The current pretender to the throne is the New Democratic Party which has never held office in the province. In British Columbia, the Social Credit Party held power for nearly four decades (with one three year intermission in 1972) until its recent defeat at the hands of the New Democratic Party.[6]

Canadian attitudes toward liberal-democracy can be traced to the expulsion of royalists from the thirteen colonies following the American Revolution and to waves of British immigration in the mid-nineteenth century. In both Ontario and Québec, they provided the fiber for a new society which incorporated all of the worst elements of an English feudal mentality worshipping the monarchy, social stratification, strict Protestantism and collectivist tendencies. With the exception of language and religious differences which were significant, this founding ideology had little difficulty co-opting the French language variant which Tories inherited and preserved following the end of France's imperial presence in North America in 1759.[7] When their political parties, known as the Family Compact in Ontario and the Chateau Clique in Québec, were removed from power with the coming of responsible government in 1848, they refused to wither away. Instead, these political chameleons transformed themselves into the Conservative Party of Canada and succeeded in winning the first federal election following Confederation.

Unlike their American counterparts who also claim the name "conservative," Canadian conservatives owe little historical allegiance to Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill or any other apostle of laissez-faire economics. They owe nothing to John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau or any like-minded thinkers. As Seymour Martin Lipset has noted, the influence of toryism on Canadian political life has left us with a heritage that degrades basic liberal values such as achievement and egalitarianism while enshrining those of ascription and elitism.[8] There is little doubt that the need to conquer a vast, hostile and underpopulated land lent credence to a Tory vision of state formation. In fact, all Canadian political parties have subscribed, in varying degrees, to the Tory vision of strong, central authority, the most notable of which was no reluctance to use the engines of state power in the forging of national institutions, and, in the case under consideration, a national broadcasting system.[9]

Long before the idea that the state should be the dominant actor in broadcasting policy, Canada had a consistent record of government involvement in economic programs. Pre-1867 colonial administrations financed the construction of a canal system, one of which circumvented the Lachine rapids on the St. Lawrence waterways at Montréal, the other bypassed Niagara Falls.[10] Buoyed by the

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Democracy in Alberta (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1955).

[6]Martin Robin, "British Columbia: The Politics of Class Conflict," in Robin, 27-68.

[7]Walter Stewart, *True Blue: The Loyalist Legend* (Toronto, Ontario: Collins Publishers, 1985), 198.

[8]G. Horowitz, "Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism in Canada: An Interpretation," in Hugh G. Thorburn, ed., *Party Politics in Canada*, 4th ed. (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1979), 55-6.

[9]Philip Resnick, *The Masks of Proteus: Canadian Reflections on the State* (Montréal and Kingston, London, Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 39.

[10]H. A. Innis, "Government Ownership and the Canadian Scene," in H.A. Innis (Mary Q. Innis, ed.) *Essays in Canadian Economic History* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1956), 89.

growth and development which followed the opening of a continuous route from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to the head waters of Lake Superior, the government embarked on an ambitious railway construction project in central Canada in 1852, the aftermath of which left the colonial regime deep in debt and on the verge of bankruptcy.[11]

In spite of the fiscal bloodletting which followed in the subsequent crash of 1856, post-Confederation Canadian governments became active participants in transportation planning. Incidentally, it is no coincidence that the first broadcast legislation was initiated and administered by a ministry involved in transportation, the Department of Marine and Fisheries. The government financed railway construction on Prince Edward Island and built the Intercolonial which linked Montréal and Halifax on the Atlantic seaboard.[12] In 1870 the Province of British Columbia joined Confederation on the condition that a railway would be built from Montréal to the Pacific Coast. In 1871, Sir John A. Macdonald's Conservative government decided to underwrite the project and one of Canada's most successful private corporations, Canadian Pacific, was born as a joint public and private project.[13] Canadian economic history is the history of such intervention.[14] In 1879, the federal Conservative government passed the National Policy, a tariff package designed to protect Canadian business from U.S. enterprises. It was the cornerstone of Canadian economic policy toward the United States until the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement was negotiated in 1988. A very Tory government in Ontario nationalized the private power industry in 1906.[15] This was followed by government acquisition of the bankrupt Canadian Northern Railway in 1919 which formed the basis of the existing Canadian National System. Government initiatives in transportation produced the country's first national airline, Trans-Canada Airlines, in the throes of the Great Depression.

The influence of anti-liberal, anti-republican and anti-American toryism is much more than a philosophical coloring in a country which grudgingly pays token lip service to liberal democracy and free enterprise economics. It is an all-encompassing shadow covering most regions of the country. It has resulted in what one observer has coined "Tory Jacobinism," a contemporary expression of the blending of paternalism and organicism coupled with a belief in a strong, central state.[16] It has resulted in a peculiar and very Canadian phenomenon known as the Red Tory, "a philosopher who combines elements of socialism and toryism so thoroughly in a single, integrated *Weltanschauung* that it is impossible to say that he is a proponent of either one as against the other."[17] To understand why Canadians so readily accepted not only the virtual nationalization of

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[11]Frederick H. Armstrong and Neil C. Hultin, "The Anglo-American Magazine Looks at Upper Canada," in Edith G. Firth, ed., *Profiles of a Province: Studies in the History of Ontario* (Toronto, Ontario: Ontario Historical Society, 1967), 44.

[12]Innis, 89.

[13]The project was far from smooth. Macdonald was accused of profiting from the arrangement and lost the next election. He was returned five years later and finally, in 1880, the construction began. See Tom Naylor, *The History of Canadian Business* Vol. 1 (Toronto, Ontario: James Lorimer Publishers, 1975), 262-283.

[14]Raboy, 17.

[15]H. V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development* (Toronto, Ontario: Macmillan of Canada, 1975) 256-306.

[16]Resnick, 39.

[17]Horowitz, 62.

their broadcasting system in the midst of the Great Depression along with the dominance of the public system and its survival to this day, is to understand the Red Tory mind.

Role of the Press

As much as toryism has dominated Canadian political ideology, it by no means remains uncontaminated by counter-vailing theories of state formation. Sharing a common and virtually undefended border with the world's most powerful liberal-democracy has resulted in an "infection" of bourgeois ideas which has done much to soften the rigidity of a purely hierarchical, socially-stratified and organic nation. In particular, the quick commercialization of the daily press in the late Victorian period, following its slavish adherence to the doctrine of political partisanship, contributed to the belief that media could be adequately supported by revenues acquired through the sale of space to promote the use of products and services. It was a concept which found its way into early Canadian radio since many broadcasting pioneers also owned urban newspapers particularly in Toronto and Montréal. They combined their efforts with another entrepreneurial class who founded broadcasting stations with a specific view to marketing radio sets.[18] Together, in the early 1920s, they hedged their bets that broadcasting would prove to be an extremely lucrative, commercial enterprise.

Newspapers, however, were primarily regional in scope. Until the coming of satellite transmission, Canada had nothing resembling a national newspaper until recent times, although a number of magazines attempted to claim the mantle. As a consequence, few newspaper owners were equipped to meet the challenge of national broadcasting which emerged quickly following the rise of radio in the early 1920s. They treated the new medium in much the same way as they had viewed the old medium, primarily as an endeavor servicing urban markets and close-by suburban and rural territories.[19] Since radio broadcasting was a much more expensive undertaking than newspaper publishing, markets which could not support radio stations were left unserved. It would require government intervention to establish a broadcasting system that could reach listeners from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

In spite of the fact that most Canadian newspapers emerged as official voices for one or other of the two political parties,[20] they became vehicles for anxious merchandisers long before Confederation. Advertising content ran anywhere from one-third to two-thirds of a journal's content, depending on how successful the owners were in soliciting such ads. In the main, professionals such as doctors, dentists and lawyers advertised their services along with merchants with a variety of goods to sell. Railways and steamship companies later joined in, accompanied by a host of government notices and personal, classified advertisements.[21] Like the journals in which they purchased space, the advertisers were regional in na-

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[18] Shea, 101-2; Peers, 27.

[19] H. A. Innis, "The Bias of Communication," in H. A. Innis *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1951), 60.

[20] Douglas Fetherling, *The Rise of the Canadian Newspaper* (Toronto, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1990), 78.

[21] Paul Rutherford, *The Making of the Canadian Media* (Toronto, Ontario: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1978), 14.

ture. Very few of the advertisements attempted the gentle art of persuasion, preferring instead to announce such items as births and deaths, new locations for some form of service, restaurant openings and closings and daily departure times for the local railways.

With the emergence of advertising agencies in both Canada and the United States in the mid 1880's the concept of attempting to sell a good and/or a service became the dominant theme in newspaper advertisements. The agencies and their newspaper clients launched "the great age of consumer advertising."[22] Paid advertising had the positive effect of delivering the newspaper industry from the hands of the political elites who often suggested, and in many cases, dictated editorial content. Although the journals still endorsed party favorites and often slanted news content to favor their political choices, they moved to a much more neutral stance. This was dictated in part by the need not to offend large clients who may not have shared the views of a certain editor and/or owner.

The competition for advertising revenues had, by the turn of the century, created a new and independent journalism. It also spawned the growth of the large, advertiser-supported daily in most of Canada's major cities. It also solidly placed the newspaper owners on the side of a "free press," meaning in one respect, saying what one pleased under the loose laws of libel and slander of the time, and in another, a dedication to prevent any interference with editorial policy beyond the management offices.[23] By the time that newspaper owners became interested in radio, they were solidly imbued with a free-enterprise economic philosophy which often found itself in conflict with the needs of a collectivist, organic state. The 1920s were to prove to be the grounds of conflict.

Early Radio: A Bastion of Commercialism

By March 31, 1922, there were thirty-nine broadcasting stations in Canada, most of whom supported their limited endeavors by selling some form of advertising time. One year later, an additional five had been added to the spectrum.[24] As former federal communications minister Don Jamieson, himself a broadcaster, noted, until that point, their activities had created little interest in government circles in both Ottawa and the provincial capitals. They were left to their own resources and few, if any, chose to seek any form of government intervention or assistance in their enterprises.[25] The initial hands-off attitude of the federal government was soon to change.

With successful newspapers and large, urban-based American outlets as models to follow, Canadian private broadcasters not only became great believers in the concept of free enterprise, they dreamed of a continental radio market which would break down all cultural and linguistic barriers that separated Britain's grand children in a large and expanded North American market place.

Although pinpointing the exact time and place that commercial broadcasting commenced in North America still proves problematic, an incident in New York

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[22]Ibid., 62-63.

[23]Fetherling, 96-7.

[24]Thomas James Allard, *Straight Up* (Ottawa, Ontario: The Canadian Communications Foundation, 1979), 7-8.

[25]Don Jamieson, *The Troubled Air* (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Brunswick Press, 1966), 30.

on August 20, 1922, probably provides the first instance where a sponsor and a broadcaster joined forces. The American commercial communications giant, AT&T, allowed a real estate developer to sponsor a ten-minute talk show on its outlet WEAF for the princely sum of $100. AT&T believed that a radio broadcast "like a telephone conversation should be paid for by the person originating it."[26] The show launched demands for more advertising space on the station's programming schedule. Advertisers paid for what would now be termed spot announcements and the following year they began to support full, hour-long programs of dance music.

Canadian stations would not enjoy the freedom experienced by their American colleagues until 1928. Late in 1922, the hand of the collectivist Red Tory had intervened to prevent wholesale commercialization of the emerging broadcasting industry, all of which was in private hands. Licensees were told that "no toll shall be levied or collected on account of any service performed by this class of station."[27] Direct advertising with its promotion of both price and product was specifically prohibited without government consent.[28]

Although direct advertising messages were prohibited on Canada's airwaves, this is not to suggest that privately-owned stations did not serve a commercial purpose. Canada's publicly-owned railway, Canadian National, which was formed to prevent the disappearance of the debt-ridden Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk systems, entered the radio business on Christmas Day, 1923, to promote rail travel. Sir Henry Thornton, chief executive officer at C. N., rationalized that the boredom of long-distance travel might be alleviated if passengers could enjoy live entertainment in the comfort of their coach seats. To this end, the railway opened stations in Montréal and Ottawa using established telegraph lines to transmit broadcasts. The two-station CNR network soon signed affiliation agreements with other privately-owned outlets and by 1927, the railway was able to offer programming along its lines from the Atlantic to the Pacific.[29] The network eventually became the backbone of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission and later the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

The Canadian National stations enjoyed the stability which evaded many other private broadcasters. To them, commercial activity and success were synonymous and it became the primary "raison d'être" for existence. By 1927, many Canadians were able to receive powerful, and of course, commercially-supported broadcasts from south of the border, aided by frequency-allocation legislation passed in the American Congress in 1927 which significantly reduced cross-border interference. By 1928, the federal government was suffering from intense pressure from the broadcasting community to relax its commercial restrictions. On April 1, 1928, it did, although it was not prepared to turn the airwaves over to market considerations in the same fashion as the United States had done. From that point on, stations were permitted to carry "indirect" commercial messages which resembled the limited commercial announcements now broadcast by public television stations in the United States. "Direct" or purely commercial

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[26]Peers, 8.

[27]Allard, 12.

[28]Michael Nolan, "An Infant Industry: Canadian Private Radio 1919-1936," *Canadian Historical Review* 70:4 (December, 1989): 502.

[29]Shea, 103.

messages were only permitted with the permission of the government[30] and price advertising was still prohibited.[31]

The removal of the ban on direct advertising did not provide windfall incomes to radio but it did succeed in creating an increasing awareness of the potential for marketing activity amongst several large, nationally-based corporations. Imperial Tobacco, the Canadian National Carbon Company, Imperial Oil, William Neilson Company, Rogers-Majestic and Canadian General Electric began sponsoring national radio programs, and in some cases, purchased or established broadcasting stations.[32] Commercial penetration increased when several Canadian stations, particularly those in Toronto and Montréal signed affiliation agreements with both the National Broadcasting Company and the Columbia Broadcasting System. They began broadcasting mass appeal American shows such as Amos 'n Andy which proved to be extensively popular with Canadian audiences.

As Canadian historian Frank Peers noted, "in 1928, it was difficult to predict with any degree of confidence the direction in which Canadian policy would go: whether it would follow the American or the British pattern, or find a third course." Since private, commercially-bent entrepreneurs controlled Canadian broadcasting, many observers felt it was only a matter of time before all commercial restrictions in Canada were eliminated and that North America would become a single, privately-owned and commercial radio market. It was an alternative that struck fear into the hearts of the governing, Red Tory establishment. It was a direction that they were determined to reverse. The environment set the stage for the first of Canada's numerous and seemingly endless series of inquiries into broadcasting policy.

The Aird Commission
The First Victory for Red Toryism

On June 28, 1928, the Liberal administration of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King appropriated the sum of $25,000 to establish a government commission "to inquire into the radio broadcasting situation throughout Canada, and to advise as to the future administration, management, control and finance thereof."[33] The minister of marine and fisheries, P. J. A. Cardin, told the Canadian parliament that the government intended to investigate broadcasting policies in a number of countries including the United States before "coming to Parliament with a bill nationalizing the system, or some such method."[34] The Conservative party, which was to take power in the federal elections of 1930, supported the government position. Cardin's announcement indicated that the government had already decided on some form of nationalization. Although the commission of inquiry was not charged with bringing forth only nationalized models, it was widely believed in broadcasting circles that the future of privately-owned licenses was in jeopardy.

It was not until December 6, 1928, that the commission's membership was

[30] Allard, 10, 12-13.
[31] Nolan, 502.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Allard, 34.
[34] Ibid.

announced. The inquiry was to be chaired by 73-year old Sir John Aird, president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce in Toronto. He was a life-long member of the Conservative Party and was thought to be sympathetic to private initiative.[35] The two other commission members were considerably younger. Charles Bowman, editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*, was known to favor a completely publicly-owned and operated system. Bowman was a confidant of the Prime Minister and an admirer of John Reith, head of the British Broadcasting Corporation. The third member, Dr. Augustin Frigon, an engineer, was director of the University of Montréal's l'Ecole Polytechnique as well as the director-general of technical education for the province of Québec.[36] Frigon's views on private enterprise were a well-kept secret. He was viewed as the wild-card in the trio, the one who would eventually influence the final outcome of the inquiry.

The commissioners toured the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Ireland and most of Canada. They submitted their report to the House of Commons in September 1929. Due to the Stock Market Crash and the defeat of King's Liberal government in 1930, their recommendations did not receive parliamentary consideration until 1932.[37]

If the private broadcasters expected Aird to sway his colleagues and defend their interests, they were bound to be disappointed. During the hearings across the country, it had become apparent that Frigon, in particular, was becoming increasingly skeptical that private broadcasters could serve anything beyond their own self-interests. In a session held in Fredericton, New Brunswick on the thirteenth of June, 1929, Frigon expressed concern that advertisers would force broadcasters to program "whatever they think will please the public and not what they [the public] should have." In the end, Frigon chose to support Bowman who viewed radio as a "natural resource, something which the private interests if they once secured control, would exploit."[38] Aird concurred with his colleagues.

The Aird Commission report was an appeal to centralizing tendencies, paternalistic imperatives and a repudiation of private initiative. Radio, although it was not to be shielded totally from the demands of the market place, was to serve a higher, national purpose. The commissioners noted that "at present the majority of programs heard are from sources outside of Canada. It has been emphasized to us that the continued reception of these had a tendency to mould the minds of young people in the home to ideals and opinions that are not Canadian."[39] The commissioners noted that their task was "to suggest means as to how broadcasting can be carried on in the interests of Canadian listeners and in the national interests of Canada."[40]

The commissioners focused their investigations on three possible outcomes. They examined whether or not the future of radio broadcasting lay in the hands of private entrepreneurs who would receive generous government subsidies to reduce their reliance on private funding. Secondly, they explored the possibility that all

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[35] Peers, 37.

[36] Allard, 37.

[37] Emery, 43.

[38] Nolan, 504, 503.

[39] *Report of the Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting* [hereafter Aird Commission], (Ottawa, Ontario: The King's Printer, 1929), 3.

[40] Aird Commission, 3.

broadcasting should be nationalized and operated as part of a government-owned and financed enterprise. The third alternative would have placed broadcasting in the hands of Canada's nine provinces. The commissioners decided that "we are impelled to the conclusion that these interests {the listening public and the nation} can be adequately served only by some form of public ownership, operation and control behind which is the national power and prestige of the whole public of the Dominion of Canada."[41]

To achieve these goals, the report recommended that a national company to be called the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Company (C.R.B.C.) be established which would own and operate all broadcasting stations in the country. The company was to be supported by a broadcasting director appointed in each province who would have control over the programs originated by the company in that particular province. Each of the provincial commissioners were to be assisted by advisory councils consisting of citizens interested in the business of radio broadcasting.[42]

The belief that broadcasting could be used as an instrument of Canadian nationalism was widespread in the country and continues to be. Most Canadians regarded the American system which initially gave government some technical and programming controls, but left ownership and programming decisions in private hands, as a clumsy compromise.[43] In many ways, the conclusions reached by the Aird Commission were a form of defensive nationalism designed to protect Canadians from popular American culture in the same way that the nineteenth-century National Policy was designed to prevent a wholesale invasion of American business and business attitudes. The commission was very much "in-tune" with the dominant, Tory attitudes prevalent in the country in the dying years of the roaring twenties.

Nonetheless, the objectives of the Aird Commission were not solely designed to protect the majority of Canadians from "corrupting" American influences. As a consequence of a nation-building policy which incorporated at least the theory of linguistic and national duality, the quest for a sense of national unity has been foremost in the Canadian psyche since Confederation. The relationship of Canada's English-speaking and French-speaking communities has never been an easy one and has constantly been marked by periodic upswings in French-speaking nationalism which has threatened to destroy the compact of 1867. In the minds of the commissioners and many Canadians of both past and present day, national broadcasting is a critical component in minimizing internal as well as external threats to the country.[44]

On May 16, 1932, the new Conservative Prime Minister, R. B. Bennett introduced a bill in the House of Commons to establish the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission.[45] The government had stepped back from some of the Aird proposals, in particular its views on a public monopoly and provincial participation. Although the new agency was to enjoy wide powers as a broadcaster and a

[41] Ibid., 3.
[42] Ibid., 4.
[43] Jamieson, 35-36.
[44] Raboy, 8.
[45] Peers, 51.

regulator, private broadcasting was to continue to exist, if only temporarily.[46] The Prime Minister told the members that "Canadians have the right to a system of broadcasting from Canadian sources equal in all respects to that of any other country...this country must be assured of complete Canadian control of broadcasting from Canadian sources, free from foreign interference or influence."[47] In every respect, Bennett was the quintessential Tory. Although he had made his name and fortune in Calgary, Alberta, the Prime Minister was descended from royalists who had fled the American Revolution and settled in the United Empire Loyalist colonies in New Brunswick. His ancestors had instilled an unshakable fear of liberal-democracy and an obsessive hatred of republicanism in the young Bennett which he carried for the rest of his life. Rod Finlayson, an early member of the pro-public broadcasting pressure group, the Canadian Radio League and Bennett's executive assistant during his term as Prime Minister, actively exploited the leader's beliefs. Finlayson is reputed to have told a friend that in discussions around the broadcasting issue that he "worked Bennett up to such a pitch of fear about American domination that he thought the old man would call out the troops."[48]

Finlayson was only one of many Canadians who applied constant pressure on the Prime Minister to eliminate private ownership. Specifically conspicuous was a well-organized lobby group, the Canadian Radio League which was founded in Ottawa in October, 1930 by Graham Spry and Alan Plaunt. Plaunt was later to serve as a member of the governing board of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation after it was founded in 1936.[49] Although Plaunt was the organizational genius behind the lobby group, Graham Spry became its high profile intellectual leader.

Spry argued that Canada needed a publicly-owned and operated radio broadcasting system on two grounds. He recognized the inflexible economic and social rigidities imposed on a sparse population spread over a hostile and expansive land. For Spry, radio "was an agency which may be the final means of giving Canada a national public opinion, of providing a basis for public thought on a national basis, such as provincial school systems, local newspapers, theatres, motion pictures and even our parliamentary system, reflecting as it must the conflict of sectional needs and feelings, have yet to give us." He also noted that while only three of five Canadian families could receive Canadian programs, all Canadians could receive broadcasts from south of the border. He argued that "the control of public opinion, it should not be necessary to remark, must remain in Canadian hands. The alternatives are, indeed; the State or the United States."[50]

Bennett and his government responded to the Canadian Radio League which had succeeded in attracting support from Canadians of all walks of life, independent of party and linguistic considerations. The Broadcasting Act of 1932 was a

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[46]Allard, 111.

[47]Shea, 4.

[48]Allard, 72.

[49]Plaunt's contribution to the founding of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation have been documented in Michael Nolan *Foundations: Alan Plaunt and the Early Days of CBC Radio* (Montréal, Toronto, New York and London: CBC Enterprises, 1986).

[50]Graham Spry, "The Canadian Broadcasting Issue," in *Documents of Canadian Broadcasting*, Roger Bird, ed. (Ottawa, Ontario: Carleton University Press, 1988), 64, 65.

major step in enshrining the principles sought by Spry, Plaunt and like-minded supporters although they deeply disagreed with keeping parts of the private sector. The new legislation gave the newly-created Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission both the power to regulate existing private stations and to enter the field of broadcasting as a transmitter and producer of Canadian programs, either as an owner of stations or as a leasee. Its three commissioners were given the authority to determine the number, location and power of any station operating in Canada. It had the right to control the concentration of both national and locally-produced programs as well as the amount of advertising a station could carry. It could recommend the issuing, suspension or cancellation of any broadcasting license in the country. It could determine which channel a station could use and it could approve or disapprove of the formation of privately-owned networks.[51]

The creation of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission and its successor, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation stratified the broadcasting community into masters and servants. The public body ruled, the private broadcasters obeyed. In every respect, the legislation which created this relationship was a continuation of earlier government agendas deeply-steeped in Red Toryism which resulted in the nationalization of the waterways, the hydro-electric power systems and Canadian railways and airlines. The Red Tories had succeeded in marginalizing the commercial aspirations of the owners which had emerged in the newspaper age. Yet, the Red Tory victory was not complete. With the C.R.B.C., Canadians got a predominantly, but not exclusively public broadcasting system. Although successive Canadian governments have never eliminated the private sector, the Liberal government that succeeded Bennett in 1935 significantly reduced its influence with the creation of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in 1936.

Power at the Top
The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

Ironically, it was an incident in the 1935 Conservative federal election advertising program that exposed serious administrative flaws in the C.R.B.C. Sensing that power was slipping away due to a perceived mishandling of economic policy during the Great Depression, the Conservative party resorted to conducting vicious personal attacks on Liberal candidates and in particular on their leader William Lyon Mackenzie King. Both parties had been given permission by the C.R.B.C. to form regional and national networks for partisan broadcasts which, in the main, focused on the party leaders and well-known political personalities. These broadcasts drew little public reaction since the broadcasts consisted of the usual charges and counter-charges which dominated this and other election campaigns.[52]

It was the Conservative party's sponsorship of a series of dramatic broadcasts entitled "Mr. Sage" which was to prove the beginning of the end for the C.R.B.C. Prior to the broadcasts, the Conservative party purchased anonymous news-

[51] *An Act Respecting Radio Broadcasting*, 22-23 George V, Chapter 51, Section 8, paragraphs a-g, 329-330.
[52] Peers, 165.

paper advertisements with a strong suggestion of non-partisanship in which Mr. Sage was billed as a "shrewd observer who sees through the pretenses, knows the facts, and understands the true issues of the present political campaign who discusses the elections with his friends."[53] In one broadcast, the Liberal leader was accused of disenfranchising voters, profiting from the benefits of corruption and wanting to drag Canada into the Italian-Ethiopian conflict.[54] Like the newspaper announcements, the Mr. Sage broadcasts neglected to identify the Conservative party as the sponsors of the series.

The Liberals filed a stern protest with the C.R.B.C. over the Mr. Sage series. In response, the Commission ordered the Conservative party to identify the broadcasts' sponsor as part of the program. The party agreed, but chose to name an official of the advertising agency which wrote and produced the programs. The C.R.B.C. failed to respond to this deception. This further incensed Mackenzie King and in his final election speech, the Liberal leader announced that he would overhaul the C.R.B.C. if he became Prime Minister on election day.[55] King was elected and remained true to his word. On March 19, 1936, the Prime Minister appointed a special House of Commons committee to investigate the C.R.B.C. Its recommendations resulted in the Broadcasting Act of 1936 which created the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (C.B.C.).

Under the new legislation, the old three person commission was replaced by a nine member Board of Governors representing Canada's geographical regions. In 1952, the Board was expanded to eleven members. The Board derived its authority solely from the Canadian parliament.[56] The C.B.C. retained many of the powers granted to its predecessor such as the right to construct and own stations, license private stations and produce programs. Others were added, none more encompassing than Sections 21-22 which gave the Corporation exclusive control over the life and death of the private sector. The legislation gave the C.B.C. the right to determine who or who could not establish a network. The Corporation was enabled to appropriate air-time from the private sector to broadcast C.B.C. programs. It had the right to control the character of any program broadcast in the country on either its own stations or on private stations. It could control the amount of advertising on any Canadian station and allocate time for political broadcasts both in and outside election periods. It could force private stations to employ Canadian citizens for the purpose of utilizing Canadian talent. And in the final clause, private stations were required to file documents with the Board of Governors outlining their programming policies. The C.B.C. had the right to determine whether or not private stations were contributing sufficiently to the development of a national broadcasting system. If the Corporation concluded that private stations were not complying with the legislation, it was entitled to suspend licenses for a period not exceeding three months. However stations were granted the right of appeal. Finally, all recommendations for changes in facilities, such as frequency allocations and power levels, were to be forwarded to the Corporation through the Ministry of Transport who in turn was required to sub-

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Transcript of "Mr. Sage" broadcast, C.R.B.C., September 1935 in *Bird*, 133-142.

[55] Peers, 166-167.

[56] "Canadian Broadcasting Act," 1936, c.24, s.1, Section 3, paragraph 1-2.

mit recommendations back to the Ministry.[57] With a few amendments, the legislation remained intact until the 1958 law removed the Corporation's regulatory role although it did not relieve private stations from the burden of promoting Canadian talent and national unity.[58] In the 1936 legislation, the move to a paternalistic, interventionist and stratified government agency had been completed. In every respect, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reflected the state of the nation in the mid-years of the Great Depression.

Between 1936 and 1945, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation consolidated its grip on the nation's radio broadcasting activity. It began to build on the C.R.B.C. network of 54 stations broadcasting in both English and French, seven of which were owned by the commission. One of its first steps was to divide the Corporation's administrative structure into five regions, British Columbia, the Prairies, Ontario, Québec and the Maritimes. When Newfoundland joined in 1949, it became the sixth region.[59] By 1941, the C.B.C. had constructed nine transmitters, four of which operated at fifty kilowatts. During the Second World War, the C.B.C. established its own news service and in spite of financial restrictions, it offered one-hundred and thirteen hours of programming weekly in both English and French.[60] In October, 1943, the Corporation announced the formation of the Dominion network. It was designed to cater to listeners interested in light entertainment as well as commercial sponsors who had difficulty buying the limited space on the existing Trans-Canada network. To launch the Dominion network, the C.B.C. expropriated the frequency of Toronto's C.F.R.B., which had been operating on clear-channel 860. In return, the private station was allowed to use the C.B.C.'s 1010 and increase power to ten kilowatts, a previously unheard of ceiling for a private outlet. The Dominion network, which closed in 1962 when the C.B.C. converted C.J.B.C. to a French-language outlet, had one C.B.C. station connected to 34 privately-owned operations. By the end of World War Two, the C.B.C. was operating an international service in fifteen languages[61] as well as a French-language network of three Corporation stations linked to ten private operators.[62]

Conclusion

As Marc Raboy has noted, the struggles of the 1920s and 1930s which produced a dominant public sector in Canadian broadcasting were centered in a vision of nation building. The country was attempting to emerge from a British colonial past while simultaneously resisting the encroachment of American values founded in liberal-democracy and laissez-faire economics. On one hand, Canadians sought to preserve all that was good about the British connection and to avail themselves of the pleasures of American economic growth while defining a culture that was neither.[63] Specifically, the dominant ideology which engineered

[57] "Canadian Broadcasting Act," 1936, c.24, s.1, Sections 21-22.
[58] "The Broadcasting Act," 1958, 7 Elizabeth II, Chapter 23, Section 10.
[59] Shea, 105-106, 107.
[60] Emery, 53.
[61] Shea, 109.
[62] Allard, 140.
[63] Raboy, 18.

the thinking of the time was the belief set we know as Red Toryism.

Red Toryism was more than a minor streak of ideas which tempered the savagery of laissez-faire economics. In every respect, it governed behavior in the Canadian political culture and influenced the decision-making process of the state. It was, and to some degree, remains the primary engine by which the state machinery is operated. As R. B. Bennett noted in a 1935 radio broadcast,

> Reform means Government intervention. It means Government control and regulation. It means the end of laissez-faire. I summon the power of the State to its support. Government will have a new function to perform in the economic system. It will be a permanent guide and regulator with the rights and power of correction, with the duty and responsibility of maintaining hereafter in our whole industrial and capitalist system, a better and more equitable distribution of its benefits; so that wealth may come more readily to the rescue of poverty and capitalism will be in fact your servant and not your master.[64]

Although the struggle for public broadcasting pitted the so-called "good guys" against the "bad guys," it represented more than that. It was an extension of the debate on defining the parameters of the Canadian state, the role of individuals and institutions within that state. Although the private sector has grown in both size and influence in recent years, it does not indicate that public broadcasting in Canada is a dead issue. Although the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has suffered at the hands of the current government, it continues to survive, and in some ways, it continues to prosper. It operates services in radio, FM-stereo and television in both English and French across the country. To this, it has added an extensive Northern service which broadcasts in a myriad of First Nations languages as well as an international service, although somewhat thinner than in previous years. In 1987, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was awarded a license to conduct an all-news cable service over the protests and interventions of private broadcasters and their interest groups.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is not an exclusive player in the public environment. The Province of Ontario owns and operates two television networks, TV Ontario and La Chaine Française. Public radio and television networks exist in Québec, the Atlantic Provinces, Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Unlike the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which accepts limited commercial advertising for its French and English networks and CBC NewsWorld, provincial networks are supported by a combination of government grants and audience donations.

Thus, in spite of the move to North American and possibly global trading zones founded in corporate capitalism, the Red Tory vision of the state still survives in Canada. It has been, and remains an influential actor in determining national policy. No where is this more evident than in the continued allegiance by most Canadians to the belief that public broadcasting still has a vital role to play in their daily lives. They owe this inheritance to the men and women of previous generations who made it possible.

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[64]Resnick, 46.

Origins, Paradigms, and Topographies: Methodological Considerations Regarding Area Studies and Broadcast Histories

James Schwoch *

Two Central Questions

My concerns in this study are the problems and possibilities of writing media histories across and around national borders, with consideration of recent scholarly trends in both media history and in international/area studies. This essay therefore is, among other things, an exploration of two methodological questions. The first question is centered on the methodology of area studies, particularly questions regarding the definition or mapping of a given area. How are areas identified, and how has this process of area identification changed as area studies expand as a field of research specialization? The second question stems from the first, and asks a question about broadcast history: Is it possible to construct historical narratives of broadcasting's growth and development that breaks from the established narrative of individual national histories and instead casts its narrative in terms of areas? In other words, is there an historical narrative for broadcasting in North America, in South America, and throughout the Western Hemisphere? In this particular writing, I cannot reasonably hope to explore all the nuances and possibilities of these two questions, although it is hoped that this study may begin to identify some intriguing paths and trails that researchers may wish to investigate in depth.

Turning to the first question of the methodology of area studies, the question of what does, or does not, precisely constitute an area remains an ongoing, central question among researchers. Individuals who conduct research in area studies are well aware of the problems of defining, mapping, delineating, and describing what does—and does not—constitute an "area." These topographical concerns of area studies were originally expressed exclusively in terms of physical geography, with area studies programs and centers first taking their definitional cues from maps and globes constructed in the historical context of the Western enlightenment. This led to two conditions: the identification of areas as physically constituted around landmasses and nation-states, and intellectually constituted in relation to modernity. The historical evidence of this genealogical condition is still quite present in area studies and remains a central concept. However, that central concept, which once stood alone as a essential and total definitive state-

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ment of what was and what was not an area (and hence what was and what was not the proper intellectual domain of area studies specialists) has, over the years, been joined by other definitional schema.

Some of these newer definitional schema which are now taken in conjunction with physical geography stem from the historical trace of empires and their impact upon their subjects. For example, Africanists have taken a leading role in placing a diasporic variable in their reconceptualization of Africa as an "area" so as to include the possibility of encapsulating the history of the slave trade—what some call "the Atlantic system"—in the domain of African studies. This opens the door to allow African area studies to discuss and explore African populations in North America, the Caribbean, and South America as well as in European metropoles. Another example can be found in the aftermath of the Soviet Union, where interest of world scholars is surging in heretofore seemingly arcane or esoteric area studies such as Altaic, Uralic, Turkic, and Central Asian studies. Also as a result of the collapse of the Soviet system, Nordic area studies scholars now need to reconsider whether and where to place the post-Soviet Baltic republics in their "Nordic" topographical projects and area research agendas.[1] In any event, these examples make clear that a genealogy of area studies descended from physical geography is now routinely nuanced by an overlapping and expanding set of competing topographies which allow each generation of scholars to reconsider, critique, and redefine on their own terms—sometimes contentiously—what does and what does not constitute their area. One of those areas of current contention is the primacy of the nation-state as a comparative unit of analysis.

Methodological issues: units, data, frames, cases[2]

For most scholars who work in area and international and area studies, the nation-state holds forth as the central unit of comparative analysis.[3] Despite vast differences apparent to even the casual observer, many assume these national units are sufficiently equivalent entities whereby difference and sameness can, upon careful comparative investigation, be discerned.[4] This assumption holds

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[1]See, for example, James Schwoch, "Television, Chechnya, and National Identity After the Cold War: Whose Imagined Community?" in *Writing Media Histories: Nordic Views*, eds. Raimo Salokangas, James Schwoch, and Kalle Virtapoha (Jyvaskyla: Kopijyva Oy, 1997), 69-108.

[2]Charles Ragin and Howard Becker, eds., *What Is a Case?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Charles Ragin, *Constructing Social Research* (London: Pine Forge, 1994).

[3]One central example in media studies is the prodigious work of Donald Browne, who until recently used almost exclusively a mainstream comparativist approach to produce a number of good books. However, the primacy of the nation-state was unquestioned. For example, the first chapter of his *Comparing Broadcast Systems: The Experiences of Six Industrialized Countries* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989) begins with "We may assume from the start that no two broadcast systems are absolutely alike." (p. 3) True; but even before starting Browne already assumed that the comparative unit can only be the nation-state. Browne's most recent study, *Electronic Media and Indigenous Peoples: A Voice of Our Own?* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1996), does an excellent job of breaking the old paradigm and is a fine example of recent comparative work utilizing comparative units other than traditional nation-states. My point here is that the paradigmatic shifts I am describing are not confined to the margins of the field, but rather can be found throughout a range of current studies, including those by the leading historians and comparativists in media studies.

[4]In part this is attributable to the genealogy of nation-state relations. There are moments in which the units are equal; for example, at the formation of the United Nations all members were theoretically equal, but the daily practice of the United Nations immediately rendered that equality to a former condition. Yet the former equality helps legitimize the institution of the system. On the

across traditional disciplines and across methodological preferences: this assumption of the viability of the nation-state unit for comparative analysis is one of the few factors bridging the social sciences and humanities.[5] A set of columns below lays out some of the concerns.

Social Sciences	**Humanities**
predictive	interpretative
extensive	intensive
large sample base ("N")	small sample base ("n")
single events	temporal durations
individuals —> aggregate	individuals —> group

The assumption of the nation-state as an appropriate unit for comparative analysis transcends these and other disparate notions between the social sciences and humanities regarding the formation of knowledge. This transcendence actually holds out the possibility for reclaiming some of the value of the nation-state as an analytic unit, for if the limitations and problems of the employment of this analytic unit can be recognized, researchers can then use the unit with knowledge of its limitations: it can be used critically.

This critical awareness is important, because it holds the prospect of propelling scholars into new modes of inquiry that do not ignore the old. As shall be further discussed in this section, most researchers work without an ongoing awareness of their methodological constraints; they work in a mode of suspended disbelief, acting as if their methodologies are neutral. A critical methodology raises this question: how does the scholarship change when the disbelief is not fully suspended but instead recognized? Or put another way, can a critical methodology provide a viewpoint, a new look, that is worthwhile and would otherwise be unattainable? In this spirit a critical methodology is not always, or not necessarily, an alternative methodology (although an alternative methodology can serve as a critical methodology.)[6] A critical methodology is a contextualizing methodology and a step toward a practice of comparative methodologies. Critical methodologies produce work that should be viewed in context with work produced with mainstream methodologies. A critical methodology is above all else a learning tool. In this essay a critical methodology promotes learning about the limitations of working with the assumption of nation-states as comparative units of analysis.

One crucial factor which presupposes the widespread adoption of this analytical unit lies in the origination of data. Much of the data utilized for international and area studies, particularly at the end of the twentieth century, comes to the researcher already prepackaged in the wrappings of nation-state units. Census data,

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genealogy of international relations, see James Der Derian, *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

[5]Some may be struck by my absence of the traditional quantitative/qualitative split, but recent methodological work has revealed its serious limitations, suggesting this duality is an outmoded concept. See, for example, Raymond A. Morrow, *Critical Theory and Methodology* (London: Sage, 1994), ch. 8.

[6]A truly alternative methodology does not have to be contextualized to mainstream and traditional methodologies; theoretically it could stand wholly outside. On the other hand, a critical methodology could take you outside, could leave you inside, but would make you aware of the inside and the outside; it stands and holds the door open.

gross national product, landmass, television households, import/export balances, and currency are just a few of the prepackaged comparative categories from which the data might originate. And the nation-state itself, of course, often creates and packages that data in order to serve its own interests, although specific interests vary widely from unit to unit. The interests of the nation-state in data packaging are not only bound up in its self-identity; interests range from that of a nineteenth-century hegemon offering its vision of systematic world knowledge[7] to a twentieth-century postcolonial hoping to demonstrate its economy has shown sufficient growth and stability to justify a massive financial infusion from external benefactors at a moment of crisis.[8] Specific conditions which allow for and contribute to the origination of data offer subtle encouragement for researchers to formulate studies using nation-states as analytic and comparative units (and can subtly discourage other formulations.)

Can research in area and international studies be done outside of, or in ways that pose alternatives to, the uses of nation-states as analytic units and data collection determinants? Of course. As I have argued elsewhere, world-systems holds out intriguing possibilities, particularly for mass culture.[9] Another obvious alternative has its roots in anthropology and ethnography, whereby thick descriptions of indigenous cultures produce analytic units which are then compared to discern difference and sameness. Yet nation-state unit comparative analysis arguably remains the dominant approach in international studies, and world-systems and ethnography have their own conditions of methodological limitations. As discussed earlier, a critical methodology opens up avenues to provide for the mutual acknowledgment of these diverse conceptual strategies. In part, this recognizes the fact that the process of choosing a conceptual strategy for researching international and area studies, whether it be comparative nation-states, world-systems, or ethnography, also implies the choosing of certain values, ideas, and ideologies that are inherent in these conceptual strategies.

While scholars would like to think that their techniques for collecting evidence and for fashioning evidence into interpretations, explanations, predictions, and representations are benign, they are not. Put another way, methodologies are not neutral—although we often operate as if they are. Therefore, rather than being essential and universal, methodologies are instead nuanced and particular. In a critical methodology, the procedures thus shift toward understanding and working in awareness of the nuances and particularities. An understanding of the role of the nation-state in shaping the origination of data, as well as the alternatives to nation-states as units of analysis, are both important factors in heightening this awareness.

How might the data about units be employed to yield findings? This question hints at the process of framing. Framing recognizes the various facets of a given research question—in this study, broadcasting and trajectories of national iden-

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[7]Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993).

[8]The difference between Mexico and Somalia, for example.

[9]James Schwoch, "Cold War, Hegemony, Postmodernism: American Television and the World-System, 1945-1992," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 14:3 (1993); James Schwoch, *The American Radio Industry and Its Latin American Activities, 1900-1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); see also Bryan S. Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism, and Globalism* (London: Routledge, 1994).

tity—and operationalizes that question. This recognition and operationalization mean different things to different researchers. A researcher motivated by an extensive understanding of many cases in expectation of deriving some sort of predictability might frame in hopes of demonstrating the dependent variable. A researcher motivated by an intensive understanding of a few cases in expectation of deriving some sort of representability might frame in hopes of demonstrating a crisis, transition, or crucial event.[10] Framing is, in a sense, the "how to" component of a methodological approach: "how to" pose questions, organize data, and otherwise settle on determining that which must be asked of the units and the data in order to shed light on the overall investigation.

The casting of frames is often mistakenly conflated with the actual methodology employed; thus regression analysis becomes the "method" of a political scientist or analyzing presidential decision-making that of a political historian. To conflate in this manner is erroneous; framing is a part of the methodological process, but not the process in its entirety. Rather, frames are typically supplied to methodologies by the disciplinary habits and practices of the individual researcher. Not only can this lead to disagreements across fields and disciplines on what might otherwise appear to be very similar studies; the discipline-as-frame-supplier can also be another factor accounting for reasons why methodologies are not essential, universal and neutral but rather nuanced, particularized and charged with values.[11]

The current common frames for the study of mass culture include those inquiries into such schema as nation, spectator/audience, ethnicity, racism,[12] technology, regulation, economy, ownership, politics, demography, author, gender, sexuality, and text. Area studies is not as of yet among this set of common frames, although globalization has now joined the set. It is obvious that frames overlap, are often used in combination, and usually contentious. This contentiousness is one of the factors which signify that methodologies are not neutral, and therefore the contentiousness of framing is an awareness of a critical methodology. Instead of eliminating frames until contentiousness disappears, the operational situation of a critical methodology recognizes the contentiousness and, as a part of the procedure, asks questions of the units and data which account for the dialectical nature of contentious frames, thus producing the beginnings of a so-called "multimethod" analysis. This does suggest that the paradigmatic shifts

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[10] In traditional terms, these sentences differentiate between quantitative and qualitative researchers. Following such recent methodological work as that in Morrow's *Critical Theory and Methodology*, which clearly points out the limitations of the traditional quantitative/qualitative split, I am attempting to steer away from this somewhat antiquated dichotomy. For a brilliant (and hilarious) demonstration of the "crisis and transition" narrative of history, see Warren Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 233-234.

[11] A personal anecdote: a few years ago, while serving on my university's Fulbright Committee, I became frustrated by the attitude of an Africanist, thirty years into an area studies career, who could not review an application from a student who wished to go to Brazil because the Africanist felt unqualified and "had nothing to say about Brazil." The idea that an Africanist has "nothing to say" about the ultimate slave nation of the Western Hemisphere is, to say the least, distressing and an example of intellectual limitations from the failure to consider methodological training and retraining a career-long responsibility.

[12] In recognition of the current debate regarding the scientific existence (actually nonexistence) of race I have instead used racism, which is cultural rather than biological and can be proven to exist. For an overview of the scientific debate, see "A Growing Number of Scientists Reject the Concept of Race," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 17 February 1995, A8+.

implicit in a critical methodology might not so strongly embrace the parsimonious values of traditional methodologies. Such an idea seems at variance with most views, which suggest that for a methodology (and by extension a theory) to have utility it must fit a wide range of situations with very few clauses or conditions—it must be parsimonious. Parsimony, while useful, nevertheless strikes me as an overdetermined value of a Cold War intellectual formation which stressed universal solutions, constant conditions, and the elimination of contentiousness as a social good; the time is ripe for re-evaluation.[13] As part and parcel of moving beyond a Cold War mentality, we must also do the difficult yet exciting work of reconsidering the intellectual assumptions, formations, and paradigms through which we thought we understood the world in which we live.

Area as Topographic Unit: Case Histories of Broadcasting

Units, data, and frames allow comparativists to construct cases. For this paper, I want to offer some sketches of how historical narratives of North and South American broadcasting might take shape. I emphasize these are only sketches; the full shadings and contours of such a history are beyond the scope of a single essay. In addition, although I critiqued the nation-state as a comparative unit of analysis, I am not going to dispense with the nation-state. Rather, I want to sketch these historical trajectories, on occasion by using the national histories of broadcasting in Canada, Cuba, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and the USA as background colors.[14]

A. Frequencies and the management of the electromagnetic spectrum

As one example, we might ask the following: how has the electromagnetic spectrum been developed in the Western Hemisphere? In particular, how have the

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[13]The intellectual dominance of physics during the Cold War is an example of universalised methodology. Biotechnology, on the other hand, can now supplant physics in a post-Cold War intellectual climate which decenters universalism and recenters around methodological nuances and particularities; biotechnology is built around such intellectual principles.

[14]Unless otherwise indicated, the background literature for these sketches is from: Schwoch, *The American Radio Industry*; Browne, *Electronic Media and Indigenous Peoples*; Knowlton Nash, *The Microphone Wars: A History of Triumph and Betrayal at the CBC* (Toronto: McClellan and Stewart, 1994); Elizabeth Fox, *Latin American Broadcasting: From Tango to Telenovela* (Luton: University of Luton Press, 1997); Michael Salwen, "Broadcasting to Latin America: Reconciling Industry-Government Tensions in the pre-Voice of America Era," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 17:1 (March 1997), 67-90; Elizabeth Mahan, "Media, Politics, and Society in Latin America" (review essay), *Latin American Research Review* 30:2 (1995), 138-162; Thomas Skidmore, ed., *Television, Politics, and the Transition to Democracy in Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Roger De La Garde, William Gilsdorf, and Ilja Wechselmann, eds., *Small Nations, Big Neighbour: Denmark and the Quebec/Canada Compare Notes on American Popular Culture* (London: John Libbey, 1993); Richard Collins, *Culture, Communication, and National Identity: The Case of Canadian Television* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Roger Bird, ed., *Documents of Canadian Broadcasting* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988); Emile G. McAnany and Kenton T. Wilkinson, eds., *Mass Media and Free Trade: NAFTA and the Culture Industries* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996); Michael Salwen, *Radio and Television in Cuba: The Pre-Castro Era* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1994); Russell Johnston, "The Early Trials of Protestant Radio, 1922-38," *Canadian Historical Review*, 75:3 (September 1994): Laura Marks, "Reconfigured Nationhood: A Partisan History of the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation," *Afterimage*, 21:8 (March 1994); Denise Hartsough, "Film Union Meets Television: IA Organizing Efforts, 1947-1952," *Labor History* 33:3 (Summer 1992); Ed Kahn, "The Carter Family on Border Radio," *American Music* 14:2 (Summer 1996); Gene Fowler and Bill Crawford, *Border Radio* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1987).

broadcast bands developed? The situation prior to 1927 was—not only in this area but in the entire world—for the most part ad hoc and circumstantial, with no orderly system of using or assigning frequencies. A topographic sketch of radio broadcasting circa 1921 might produce a frequency map with contours that did not demonstrate much, if any, consideration of national borders in North America, for example. Although this age clearly predates the techniques of audience measurement to which we have become accustomed, evidentiary materials such as listener diaries, letters to the editors of newspapers and magazines, activities of associations such as the American Radio Relay League or the Canadian Radio League, trade press (such as it was), early government regulatory decisions, and manufacturer exports do suggest that radio listening in the early 1920s was not so much conceived of as a "national" experience, but rather a distinction between "local" and "distant" stations, with a "distant" station defined as a distant city anywhere, be it Pittsburgh, Montreal, Veracruz, or Havana. Broadcasters of the early 1920s typically shared a very small number of frequencies on an ad hoc basis and no nation in the Western Hemisphere had yet to successfully define or contain broadcasters to a specific portion of the electromagnetic spectrum.

In North America, the continent-wide tendencies of radio broadcasting were already evident at Herbert Hoover's 1924 National Radio Conference, where Canada, Mexico and Cuba also participated. By 1925, the Croseley Radio Manufacturing Company of Cincinnati was planning production runs around the buying habits of not only USA citizens but radio enthusiasts in Brazil, Mexico, Canada and Argentina. Graham Spry, at the center of the nationalist whirlwind sweeping across Canada, had begun to argue the need for countervailing identities in response to this lack of a national identity for Canadian broadcasters and audiences.

By the end of the 1920s, however, a worldwide reorganization of the spectrum had taken place, and as a part of this reorganization North America saw a vast expansion of the available frequencies for broadcasting.[15] The lasting significance of these global decisions, still applicable today, rests on a basic philosophy and system of governance for allocating and assigning frequencies in the electromagnetic spectrum.[16] Simply put, this was the moment at which the world, working through conjoined national governments, formally decided how to share this global resource. Prior to this era, the various uses of frequencies for different types of radio uses, ranging from broadcasting to ship-to-shore wireless, had been largely ad hoc and circumstantial; no orderly global system for allocating, assigning, and using frequencies had been formally constituted and agreed upon in an international regulatory setting. At times, simultaneous users of the same frequency would negate each other and render both signals incomprehensible. Thus radio, since its emergence as a system of communications (circa 1900) and through the initial heyday of broadcasting (circa 1920), had operated in terms of an ad hoc spectrum policy: a catch-as-catch-can activity shaped by local practice and a version of squatter's rights leading to local, regional, and national industries manufacturing for the needs of local, regional, and national users rather

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[15]Schwoch, *The American Radio Industry*, ch. 3 details the conferences and agreements which led to the global governance of the electromagnetic spectrum in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

[16]For a detailed discussion of this conference, see James Schwoch, "The American Radio Industry and International Communications Conferences, 1919-1927," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 7:3 (October 1987), 289-310; Schwoch, *The American Radio Industry*, ch. 3.

than internationally codified guidelines. Despite the impending chaos, radio had so far thrived on these arrangements, but evidence grew everywhere that such arrangements could not indefinitely continue without risking collapse of what had become, for governments, corporations, and audiences, an important industry.[17]

Two plans were put on the table at the Washington Conference of 1927: the European plan and the American plan.[18] Pared to the bare essentials, the two plans differed on the basic method of categorizing, and therefore dividing, the spectrum into useable and governable components. The European plan argued that the basic unit of spectrum division should be the nation-state. In other words, each nation-state would be allocated a section of the spectrum to then assign for services (broadcasting, ship-to-shore, etc.) as it saw fit. The American plan argued that the basic divisive unit of spectrum allocation should be services. Each nation-state would then be assigned a section from each service. Below is a visual comparison. I have used familiar services as examples; please note that in actual discussions the services are described in terms of "wave groups" such as long waves, medium waves, etc. and/or in frequency ranges (Very High Frequencies, Ultra High Frequencies, etc.), any of which are capable of being used for a range of specific services. But it is easier to think in terms of familiar technologies, and the sketch on the next page hopefully helps demystify the process.

The American plan carried the day and remains the basic regulatory philosophy of global spectrum allocation and assignment. What were the reasons for advocating such a plan? The American radio industry clearly had a global vision for its own research, development, and manufacturing capabilities. A contrasting plan, such as the European, which prioritized nation-state divisions of the spectrum would make the globalization of manufacturing and distribution of radio equipment notoriously difficult, because equipment would have to be built to the technical requirements of each nation-state spectrum unit. If, for example, each nation could put its broadcasting frequencies wherever in its section of the spectrum it so chose, a globalized radio manufacturing industry would conceivably have to build a different tuner for every nation, which presented logistical nightmares and destroyed the potential surplus value generated by a radio industry built upon the comparative advantages of global marketing.[19]

Using the service as a basic unit of division allowed for the maximal globalization of radio technology. Any nation could export anywhere (assuming free trade, of course) without fear of obsolescence or technical incompatibility imposed by the whims and wishes of a national government. The technology of ra-

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[17]Two excellent studies of the coalescence of radio into an industry are Susan Smulyan, *Selling Radio: The Commercialization of American Broadcasting, 1920-1934* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994); Susan Douglas, *Inventing American Broadcasting, 1899-1922* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

[18]These labels recognize that the first plan grew out of a consortium of European nations whose radio industries were engaged in an emergent state sponsorship, and the second plan came directly from representatives of the American radio industry who came to have a preponderant influence among the members of the United States planning committees for, and delegates to, the conference. This influence included an extension of influence into Latin American delegations; hence my choice of "American" instead of "United States." The relevant primary documents are cited in Schwoch, *The American Radio Industry*, ch. 3, notes 52-59.

[19]The largest (in terms of number of receiving sets produced annually) radio manufacturer in the United States, Croseley Radio of Cincinnati, Ohio, established a production schedule based on global set consumption patterns as early as 1925. The relevant primary document is cited in Schwoch, *The American Radio Industry*, ch. 4, note 20.

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE OF THE SPECTRUM: TWO VIEWS

European Plan (a hypothetical example)
future nations determine new allocations—>
allocation France | USA | Japan | Cuba | Poland |other nation-state units
SPECTRUM ====|=====|=====|=====|=====|====>
assignment 1 3 4 2 |2 1 3 4 |4 3 2 1|1 2 4 3|1 2 3 4 |
future services assigned within national allocations—>

1. AM (medium wave) radio (1-4 are hypothetical
2. ship-to-shore maritime commerce examples of service
3. military—aviation assignments)
4. television

American Plan (a hypothetical example)
future services determine new allocations—>
allocation AM radio| ship | aviation | TV | ??? |new services yet invented
SPECTRUM =====|=====|=====|=====|====|====>
assignment 1 3 4 2 |2 1 3 4 | 4 3 2 1 |1 2 4 3 |1 2 |
nations assigned frequencies within services—>

1. France (1-4 are hypothetical examples of
2. Japan national assignments)
3. USA
4. Cuba

dio would no longer be local, regional, or national, but rather global. It is not surprising that the first to realize the full implications of designing spectrum policy in global terms were the American radio corporations, who in the 1920s had become the world's leading developers and manufacturers of radio equipment.[20] In the process they became, like their telegraphic ancestors, more international-minded, although as Daniel Headrick points out, they also had to be rather discreet about their new global visions because they operated in an age of bellicose nationalism.[21]

Was there a sense of national identity in the technology of 1920s radio? Perhaps. There is evidence to suggest that some saw national identity in the sets, transmitters, and sundry apparatus. Officials at the U.S. State Department reached this perspective during the First World War and carried it into the 1920s.[22] European national governments, by corporatist sponsorship of their indigenous radio manufacturing industries during the 1910s and 1920s, linked their largest manufacturers to national identity through protective legislation. And while the evidence from radio audiences on their affinity to link national identity

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[20]Based on comparative evaluation with European manufacturers of global exports during the 1920s. See Schwoch, *The American Radio Industry*, ch. 4.

[21]Daniel R. Headrick, *The Invisible Weapon: Telecommunications and International Politics, 1851-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Terhi Rantanen, *Foreign News in Imperial Russia: The Relationship Between International and Russian News Agencies, 1856-1914* (Helsinki: Annales Academine Scientarum Fennicae Dissertationes Humanarum Literarum 58: 1990).

[22]For the citations of relevant primary documents, see Schwoch, *The American Radio Industry*, ch. 2, notes 22-60.

and radio technology is sketchy and incomplete, the eager willingness of Latin American radio audiences in the 1920s to purchase locally manufactured receiving sets despite their obvious patent infringements and violations meant that, as one General Electric salesman stationed in Buenos Aires in 1922 ruefully admitted to the home office, company sales were down because "the small dealer displayed his wares topped by a 'Made In This Country' sign and asked that the public purchase to protect home industry."[23] These same audiences regaled in tuning in stations from everywhere in the hemisphere, especially the United States, possibly suggesting that in the early 1920s the text of radio was less a location for national identity than was the technology of radio. Stations were either local or distant, but they were not, in the minds of most listeners, foreign or domestic. Although much more work needs to be done on this question, particularly concerning the perceptions of audiences, evidence currently known and analyzed does seem to suggest the primacy of national identity in the technology, rather than the text, of early radio.

I am personally convinced that the technology of radio, through the 1920s, provided an important location for the assignment of national identity by governments, corporations, and audiences. However, this question has not yet been fully subjected to rigorous research by a wide range of researchers. Even if a definitive answer regarding national identity in the technology of 1920s radio is not yet possible, it can nevertheless be concluded that the adoption of the American plan at the 1927 Washington Radio Conference effectively wiped radio technology clean of national identity, and did so in the interests of transnational capital. Just as importantly, the electromagnetic spectrum would no longer be subject to allocation determined by national interests.[24] A tunable broadcast receiving set would now be, no matter its nation of origin, precisely that—no more, no less. From this moment on, broadcast audiences would conceptualize the spectrum primarily in terms of which services were located on which bandwidth, rather than in terms of which nations controlled which frequencies; a typical user still imagines, for example, finding the French station in the short-wave band, rather than finding all the French frequencies for all services regardless of their spectral location. To find national identity in the spectrum, one is now confined to the specific frequency housed in a larger service where all nations are without difference. In turn, national identity in radio would descend to the text because the deprivation of national identity in technology and the spectrum meant that the text became the most conducive arena of representation where national identity might thrive.

B. Growth of stations and networks in the 1930s

Indeed, in a panoramic view of the full emergence of national identity in the text of radio broadcasting, evidence abounds to confirm its arrival in the late

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[23]For the citations of relevant primary documents, see Schwoch, *The American Radio Industry*, ch. 5, notes 23-41. The tale of our anonymous witness from Buenos Aires can be found in "Report Governing the History of Radio Sud America," 17 June 1924, file 11-14-10, Box 101, Papers of Owen D. Young, Van Hornesville, NY. Young was a General Electric executive and co-founder of the Radio Corporation of America; Radio Sud America was an RCA subsidiary.

[24]The distinction between allocation and assignment is crucial here; allocation signifies giving a new service spectrum space, while assignment signifies giving nations (and by extension users) frequencies for utilizing that new service.

1920s and early 1930s. National networks, whether commercial or public, were permanently established circa 1926-1930 in the Western Hemisphere, Europe, Australia, and Japan. Colonial systems heard their imperial voices beginning with the British Broadcasting Corporation short-wave services in 1931 and, at virtually the same time, the inauguration of similar imperial short-wave services from the other European colonial powers. Audiences became conceptualized by broadcasters, sponsors, ad agencies, public intellectuals (educators, critics) and governments as national units. Some audiences were subjected to authoritarian technologies, such as the wiring of communal loudspeakers in the USSR as a substitute for the receiving set and the distribution of "untuneable" or fixed-frequency sets (the Volksradio) in Nazi Germany, thus guaranteeing for many the elimination of competing national voices. Global audiences tuned in a growing short-wave propaganda war before and during the Second World War.[25] In short, radio in the 1930s learned how to speak to, by, for, and about nations. Thus the decade of television's invention (the 1930s) is also the decade by which national identity evacuated the technology of radio and came foursquare to the text of radio.

I do not mean to suggest or imply that governments, corporations, and audiences immediately and consciously recognized that the decisions made at the Washington Conference of 1927 regarding spectrum policy meant that national identity had been shunted out of the technology of radio and out of the electromagnetic spectrum. The ideologies of globalism and nationalism do not operate in such simple and mechanistic ways. Rather, the 1927 Conference is an event which can help better understand the many other events surrounding it, and an event which clearly changes the trajectory of national identity in broadcasting. I will, however, close this section with a provocative question: is the emergence of national identity in the text of radio concomitant with the evacuation of national identity from the technology of radio a mere coincidence?

The idea of networking is very much a North American concept, and simultaneously a South American concept. Early broadcasters in Europe largely faced a situation where a single powerful station in the largest city of a given nation reached the majority of the nation's population, due to the relatively small size of European nation-states. A transmitter in London, for example, with a 75-100 kilometer listening range still will reach a potential audience of about 50% of the United Kingdom, and some European nations have even better ratios. No such situation exists in North America, however, so the network question—that is, linking together stations to simultaneously share a single program—emerges quite early. The first formally constituted network, the National Broadcasting Company, emerges in the USA in 1926, descending from a number of network experiments and practices which began in the early 1920s. Similar networking actions emerged from 1925-1930 throughout North and South America. Initially, the new networks of North and South America were clearly contained within respective national boundaries.

By 1937, however, the situation had changed in terms of nationally-demarcated topography. Not only had NBC became the largest network in the USA, it also had affiliates in Cuba and in South America, and on occasion even provided pro-

[25] See, for example, Holly Cowan Schulman, *The Voice of America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

gram feeds to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. CBS and Mutual also had occasional network affiliates in Canada and Mexico, and also distributed some transcription programs in both continents, as did some other syndication services. NBC of course had more than network competition. In addition to other networks, there were powerful single stand-alone stations in North America. One of these was WLW Cincinnati, which in the 1930s had authorization to run at 500,000 watts, 10 times more powerful than any other station in the USA and Canada. Additionally there were the "border blasters"; some of the most interesting stations in the history of North American broadcasting. These powerful stations set up shop just across the Mexican border but aimed at audiences in the USA and Canada; authorized at up to 100,000 watts, they are believed to have run—unauthorized, or course—at up to 1,000,000 watts. Because they did not use audience ratings services but only measured their audience based on the response to mail order advertisements, the topography of these stations is a bit more difficult to map.[26]

C. New Technologies: Television 1945-1955

The introduction of new broadcast technologies also has a topography that is not only national but simultaneously encompassing North America and South America as distinct and as linked areas. Television proved to be an extraordinarily complex problem when you look at North America itself as the unit of analysis. National treaties specified that TV stations on the same frequency or channel had to be separated by 250 miles when a national border was involved (within a nation, 200 miles was the original limit, a limit quickly adjusted in response to rapid growth.) The proximity of large urban areas in NE USA and SE Canada immediately created problems: interference on the same, or adjacent channels; conflicts between broadcast and military uses of this portion of the electromagnetic spectrum; different engineering standards for television signals; and questions of technical compatibility in manufacturing.

The invention of television during the 1930s took place across at least three continents and among at least seven nations (USA, USSR, Germany, France, Netherlands, Japan, United Kingdom).[27] Emerging just before the opening hostilities of the Second World War, these television systems re-emerged in a postwar world. Each had, in its own way, been conceived and developed as a national industry. Audiences, sets, stations, and programs all were seen as components of the nationalization of a given television system.

Technically speaking, and speaking of technology, these various national systems were a conundrum in terms of nation-state units. On the one hand, the invention of television was a global process, whereby many ideas and patents routinely and quickly crossed borders and oceans. On the other hand, inventing television was simultaneously a series of discrete projects tied to national technical

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[26]Ed Kahn, "The Carter Family on Border Radio," is one of the few studies to utilize weekly mail-order response data collected by a border blaster in Del Rio.

[27]There may be more nations who should be on this list. One thorough study of the technical developments, centered on the United States, is Joseph Udelson, *The Great Television Race: A History of the American Television Industry, 1925-1941* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1982). Browne, *Comparing Broadcast Systems*, briefly encapsulates developments in several European nations. An excellent new biography relevant to this question is Albert Abramson, *Zworykin: Pioneer of Television* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

means and abilities. Foreshadowing in a mild and modest way the insane, costly, and colossal competition in military-industrial capabilities between the USA and USSR throughout the Cold War, inventing television in the 1930s signified national industrial accomplishment. What emerged were a series of national systems, each carrying their own specific technologies of operation. While differences were relatively slight, each nation nevertheless initially developed its own set of technical standards which were, to varying degrees, slightly incompatible with the other television-inventing nations. The number of sets in use were few; yet it could be difficult, if not impossible, to pick up the telecast of another nation on these sets, due to these slight variances in technological standards. One could, of course, pick up one's own national telecast. So the invention of television, while not retaking the entire terrain of technology as a location to signify national identity, does at least re-establish a beachhead for national identity in the technology of broadcasting.

What little evidence of pre-World War II television programs that we have with us today often are programs about television itself, such as the 1936 BBC newsreel *Television Comes To London*. National representations in these early programs rests largely in the technical ability to build such a facility and not in the programming itself. Interestingly, the earliest identity supplied in television texts apparently is self-identity; thus Theodor Adorno's observations[28] about early television's presumptuousness or self-awareness, coupled with some of these examples, may suggest that the initial identity represented in the television text was not national identity but instead the identity of television itself. There are several well-known examples from the earliest preserved programs of American television, such as the first programs of the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) morning program *Today* with host Dave Garroway's self-reflexive investigation of television studio equipment, or Edward Murrow's *See It Now* 1951 Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) documentary with Murrow in the control room showing simultaneous video feeds from New York and San Francisco. This latter example may be a transition text from self-identity to national identity, as television shows itself by representing its linking of Atlantic and Pacific and thereby reaffirming American manifest destiny.

Thus these early examples of television texts demonstrate that the signification of national identity in the emergent prewar black-and-white television systems of the USA and Europe took place in the technology of television rather than in the text of television. While there may not be enough evidence (because of the failure to preserve the early television text) to conclusively determine that the early television text did not typically connote national identity but rather self-identity, one is nevertheless hard-pressed to find textual examples of the representation of national identity in the origins of television. This does suggest that national identity in the television text is a genealogical process whereby national identity was not originally present but descended from other places—one of those places being the technology of television.

Television began a regular service in Europe (United Kingdom) in 1936 and in the United States in 1939. The Second World War shut down television in

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[28]Theodor Adorno, "Television and the Patterns of Mass Culture," in *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America*, eds. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (Glencoe: Free Press, 1957), 474-488.

Europe—immediately for some nations, eventually for others. The few USA stations cut back on hours at the onset of American involvement, but slowly increased hours during 1943—1945. Within the USA, however, television lost significant spectrum space when the Radio Technical Planning Board, in anticipation of postwar military dominance, reassigned some television VHF channels to the military.[29] The loss of these frequencies would eventually trigger the 1948-1952 freeze on new television licenses by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), severely limiting television growth in the USA.

In postwar Europe, national systems, operating in black-and-white and with their own incompatible standards, began broadcasting surprisingly quickly given the severity of war damage and the initial difficulties of postwar recovery.[30] However, during the 1940s and into the 1950s the incompatible technical standards of European black-and-white television eventually became recast and redefined in light of two postwar developments: the invention of color television, and the emergence of Cold War geopolitics. In the geopolitical realm, the defeated powers of the Second World War saw their pre-war broadcast systems essentially denationalized. Italy and Germany emerged from occupation with the legislated prohibition of national networks[31] and with the eventual adoption of the PAL color television system of technical standards, a system with predominantly British roots.

PAL, however, did not lay claim to all of Western Europe; France introduced its own color television system, SECAM, a system incompatible with PAL. SECAM proved the system of choice for the USSR, and allowed for a technical division between Western and Eastern Europe (with a few odd exceptions[32]) that

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[29]The RTPB undertook a vast reorganization of spectrum uses by the USA in preparation for postwar changes. Although USA military uses of the spectrum are routinely classified for reasons of national security, the initial uses of these VHF channels were probably for radar and for voice communmications. Note how the allocation is VHF (Very High Frequency) service and the assignment is determined by the nation-state; television was not the only VHF service (FM radio also operates in the VHF band) but, by 1930s engineering standards and spectrum allocations, VHF was the only allocation where the assignment of television was feasible. In the aftermath of the Cold War some Eastern European nations are reconsidering their military assignments in hopes of freeing up VHF space for new television channels; on the situation in Hungary, for example, see *Economist*, 17 December 1994, 69. It is possible that an argument could eventually be offered in favor of reassigning "Soviet" assignments from the 1940s-1980s on the grounds that "Soviet" assignments encompassed the needs of the post-Soviet republics. I am currently investigating this point through archival research of global spectrum decisions during this period.

[30]Limited television services began in Europe despite such basic postwar human difficulties as procuring food; many Europeans subsisted on an average of 1,500 calories or less per day during the 1945-47 period. A recent and thorough study of European recovery (including caloric intake) and dawn of the Cold War is Melvin Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, The Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1992).

[31]This legislation established autonomous broadcast systems for each of the West German *lander* (states) and, in Italy, prohibited RAI from linking Italian stations by wire for the nationwide simultaneous dissemination of programming. "National" programming eventually emerged in television through, among other means, the synchronization of syndicated programming. For an overview of the systems as they stood in the early 1980s, see Raymond Kuhn, *Broadcasting and Politics in Western Europe* (London: Frank Cass, 1985); for more recent updates, see Richard Collins, *Broadcasting and Audiovisual Policy in the Single European Market* (London: John Libbey, 1994); Allesandro Silj et al., *The New Television in Europe* (London: John Libbey, 1992). Japan accepted USA technical standards during the occupation period; see Browne, *Comparaing Broadcast Systems*, 317.

[32]In addition to France, Belgium internally split between PAL and SECAM as a way of promoting the dual autonomy of Flemish and Walloon populations. Belgium foreshadows a post-Cold War condition whereby ethnic rather than national identity is paramount, but the bipolar structure

mirrored the Cold War split. This split was established circa 1961. So within fifteen years, the nationally-incompatible black-and-white technical systems of prewar European television had been fully recast away from national identity and into a geopolitically-incompatible color bifurcation that was more or less drawn along the lines of the Cold War; national identity in European black-and-white television technology was subsumed into a bipolar color television world. The Iron Curtain, rather than national boundaries, now became reinforced with the threads of technical incompatibility in European television. Superpower interests transcended national interests in terms of European television technology, thus again confirming for Europeans the lesson of the Washington Radio Conference of 1927: the text (not the technology) is the most promising haven, in the long run, for national identity to thrive.

Thus technology and regulation were used, in varying degrees, first to reinforce and then to transcend European national identity in television. For Europe, this included the repositioning of systems and national audiences relevant to a emergent bipolar world. While the text of television connoted national identity, the technology of television would also connote geopolitical identity. In many ways, therefore, black-and-white incompatibility, PAL, and SECAM can all be initially seen through the prism of national identity as European responses to the globalization of radio technology accomplished by the American radio industry in the 1920s, because the same corporations and governments who had led the various national European and American radio industries were also at the center of inventing television. However, PAL and SECAM were politically co-opted into a postwar global system whereby virtually all the rules of the game were set by no more than two players, neither of whom actually invented PAL and SECAM but instead redefined PAL and SECAM (like they redefined everything else) in their own global interests.

The United States faced no significant internal divisions regarding technical standards, with the exception of a highly-publicized but ultimately minor squabble between CBS and NBC's parent corporation, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) regarding differing technologies for color telecasting. The RCA system—which preserved the already-established USA NTSC standards and already-operating black-and-white system by adding compatible color—eventually carried the day.[33] An ideological challenge for broadcasters in the United States to trans-

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of the Cold War was sufficiently powerful to prevent this attitude from being anything but a marginal example at the time. With these exceptions, Western Europe went PAL while Eastern Europe went SECAM. Belgium and Germany were the two bifurcated nations (the Soviet-occupied area of Germany went SECAM, of course). I admit to being in the dark as to why the USSR chose the SECAM system rather than develop its own, "third" incompatible European system, which it obviously had the technical expertise to accomplish. My current speculation — admittedly unsubstantiated by research — is simply that choosing the SECAM system was pragmatic, allowing for sufficient difference without the expense of developing and disseminating an autonomous technical system concurrent with the massive expense of the Cold War arms race. It also served to split German interests betwen France and the United Kingdom (and thereby preserve German fragmentation, which the USSR felt was necessary for its own self-protection). Choosing SECAM therefore came with the small bonus of furthering culture divisiveness among Western European powers. The best English-language study of Sovet television (Ellen Mickiewitz, *Split Signals: Television and Politics in the Soviet Union* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1988]) says little on SECAM.

[33]The battle was taken "seriously" at RCA, with David Sarnoff calling it "the fight of our lives" but Sarnoff was a notoriously heavy-handed rewriter of his own historical impact. The best Sarnoff biography, as well as a good account of the RCA-CBS color controversy, is Kenneth Bilby,

form national radio audiences into national television audiences was, by the end of the war, beginning to be accomplished to the satisfaction of the only ones whose opinions really counted, namely audience measurement services, sponsors, and ad agencies.[34] The technical challenge in the United States to present national identity in television—especially in the text—lay not in competing technical standards but rather in the ability to network.[35] This was a demanding task, and methods of network distribution were explored and debated up to American entry into the war. A close examination of television in the USA during the 1940s suggests the possibilities of up to five networks, the possibilities of local and regional rather than national distribution of programs, and the potential for a variety of networking methods, ranging from microwave relays, syndication of 16mm telefilms, and even such exotic and visionary ideas as Stratovision, which placed transmitters in airplanes.[36]

Possibilities aside, the regulatory privileging from 1944-1950 of only one technical method of network distribution—the coaxial cable system developed by American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T), coupled with discriminatory pricing policies by AT&T which favored only CBS and NBC—effectively undercut the potential for anything but the tripartite national network system which descended from the possibilities of the 1940s to dominate American television for nearly forty years.[37] This single action, more than any other regulatory action including the FCC TV license freeze, helped to perpetuate the vision that these networks and their New York City programming represented national identity by eliminating any and all other possibilities for conceptualizing television networking in the USA. The television text would no longer primarily be seen by audiences as the expression of local or regional identity, as had been the case with WLW in Cincinnati, KTLA in Los Angeles, and elsewhere; national network-delivered identity was all that was left to be read.[38] As the AT&T system came to comple-

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The General: David Sarnoff and the Rise of the Communications Industry (New York: Harper and Row, 1986).

[34]James Schwoch, "Selling the Sight/Site of Sound: Broadcast Advertising and the Transition from Radio to Television," *Cinema Journal* 30:1 (Fall 1990), 55-66.

[35]Here the political geography of Europe is key; for many European nations, a sizable portion of the national population (often a majority) can be reached through the construction of a single television station in the capital city, thus rendering the networking question less immediately urgent than in the USA.

[36]American 1940s television has been and continues to be a very active area of recent research; see William Boddy, *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Cecelia Tichi, *Electronic Hearth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Mark Williams, *From "Remote" Possibilities to Entertaining "Difference": A Regional Study of the Rise of the Television Industry in Los Angeles, 1930-1952* (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1992); Anna McCarthy, *On Site: Television, Video, and Public Space* (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1995).

[37]AT&T was granted a de facto monopoly status by government regulators during the years 1944-1950 when they ruled that AT&T could refuse to carry a network television signal that was distributed in part on non-AT&T common carriers, thus discouraging the development of regional networking facilities (for this ruling meant that independent regional systems would never be able to be used as part of a national system). Some systems were already under construction, such as a intra-state system in Ohio operated by WLW Cincinnati to network with stations in Dayton and Columbus. This ruling effectively eliminated any possibility of common carrier competition for television networking in the United States; competition would not emerge until the geosynchronous satellite in 1975. For a detailed discussion of this argument, see James Schwoch, "A Failed Vision: The Mutual Television Network," *Velvet Light Trap* 33 (Spring 1994), 3-13.

[38]On WLW, see Lawrence Wilson Lichty, *The Nation's Station: A History of Radio Station*

tion, linking the coasts in late 1951, among the very first "national sentiments" to be expressed in the text of American television was anti-Communism represented by the visage of Joseph McCarthy and publishing of *Red Channels*.[39]

The global pattern of television technology that descended in the context of the Cold War was ultimately bipolar, and, like so many of the other global institutions influenced by this geopolitical bifurcation, proved incredibly stable. It is remarkable in retrospect how well this bipolar system handled the slow, incremental growth of television around the world in a manner that, taken as a whole, served to preserve and promote the visions of Cold War architects. Despite the emergence of additional networks in Europe and the inauguration of television systems in postcolonial nations,[40] television technology and television texts both represented and subsumed national identity, thus favoring bipolar identity in conjunction with Cold War stability; this bipolar identity, unlike national identity, was never fully subsumed in the television text (at least until 1989). In retrospect, the ideology of the Cold War was a wonderful template for controlled and stable growth of television. By the end of the 1950s, television growth could also be legitimated by national leaders as a milepost of socioeconomic progress; thus Richard Nixon and Nikita Krushchev close off the 1950s (and this essay's second case) by standing in a television kitchen and debating the relative merits of color television and rocket thrust.

D. Newer Technologies: Satellites 1975-1985

If we look at the growth of satellites as a television distribution mechanism in a North American context, in 1975 we see that Canada actually is the leading individual nation in terms of satellite uses, particularly its deployment of the ANIK satellite series. In fact, ANIK played a determinant role in operationalizing satellite distribution for USA cable networks.

In June 1973 Sid Topol, then president of Scientific-Atlanta, stood next to his display at the annual convention of the National Cable Television Association in Las Vegas and talked with USA cable operators about a new means of program distribution.[41] In conjunction with Teleprompter (a cable systems owner that

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WLW (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1964); on KTLA, see Williams, *Remote Possibilities*. As I talked through this idea with Lawrence Lichty, he rightly pointed out that this is what made it possible for critics in the 1950s such as Jack Gould (television critic for the *New York Times*) to sit in New York City and proclaim its local programs represented national culture. See also Matthew Murray, "NBC Program Clearance Policies During the 1950s: Nationalizing Trends and Regional Resistance," *Velvet Light Trap* 33 (Spring 1994), 37-48; and Lynn Boyd Hinds, *Broadcasting the Local News: The Early Years of Pittsburgh's KDKA-TV* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

[39]The "blacklist" of broadcasting, *Red Channels* typically sat on the desk of every American broadcast executive in the early 1950s. It listed entertainers suspected of Communist sympathies. The full citation is *Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television* (New York: American Business Consultants, 1950). The publishers counseled users with the Fordist observation that "...the Cominform and the Communist Party USA now rely more on radio and TV than on the press and motion pictures as 'belts' to transmit pro-Sovietism to the American public" and the kinder, gentler "In screening personnel every safeguard must be used to protect innocents and genuine liberals from being unjustly labelled." (pp. 3, 7).

[40]I have little to say at this point in the essay about the introduction of television in postcolonial nations. The Western Hemisphere with the exception of Brazil (PAL) largely adopted USA (NTSC) standards. Newly independent nations in Africa and Asia more or less followed the technical standard developed by their particular colonial master. American involvement in Vietnam, however, meant Vietnam originally went NTSC in order to use abandoned American equipment.

[41]This narrative is based on the account in "Cable — the First Forty Years," *Broadcasting* 21

later became Group W cable and then was broken into several operators) and Home Box Office (HBO), Scientific-Atlanta had custom-built an eight-meter satellite dish and sold it to Teleprompter for $100,000. While Scientific-Atlanta was (and still is) a major earth station manufacturer, up to now their production had consisted of dishes 30 meters or larger in diameter. Conventioneers at the HBO suite watched the Jimmy Ellis—Ernie Shavers title fight (only a few saw the actual fight because Ellis suffered a first-round knockout) delivered to them via a satellite uplink/downlink. Some asked if the satellite might fall from the sky; what fell instead was opportunity. In less than two years, Scientific-Atlanta and HBO struck a deal whereby earth stations would be built for about $65,000 each. HBO leased satellite transponder space, helped some cable operators acquire earth stations by providing financial assistance, and put HBO permanently on satellite feed in 1975 with the delivery of the Muhammad Ali-Joe Fraizer Manila title bout. After allowing HBO to foot the start-up costs, a struggling television station in Atlanta joined them on the same satellite, thus launching the Turner TV empire.

The idea, particularly in a global setting, was not new; indeed, the 1973 demonstration used a Canadian satellite because no USA corporation had yet launched a geosynchronous satellite that could downlink television signals to the USA landmass. And the concept had been discussed since at least 1945, when Arthur Clarke wrote an influential article suggesting the feasibility of satellite broadcasting (in the globalist spirit of the times, Clarke envisioned three geosynchronous satellites sending a single shared global program.) The timing of the idea, however, was right; growth was phenomenal, and by 1981 HBO had not only been joined in the sky by every major USA cable programmer but also the three traditional USA broadcast television networks. And, of course, the cable stations and broadcast affiliates were not the only ones with earth stations; millions of others bought a dish and caught a piece of the footprint. Few at the time noticed, or seemed to care, that the footprint was not neatly confined to the geographic borders of the USA but instead covered the Western Hemisphere. But before exploring the implications of this unintentional globalization of program distribution, we need to ask why this took place when it did—not before, not after. It is only a bit of a stretch to say the impetus came from two great American institutions—the Nixon White House and the family farm.

In 1970 the Nixon White House encouraged entrepreneurial activity in satellite communications, a policy which became known as Open Skies. Open Skies allowed anyone to build and operate satellites, and allowed satellite users to install earth stations. Ensuing deregulatory decisions in the wake of Open Skies reduced the minimum size requirement of earth stations, thus lowering the cost of entry into earth station ownership. Cable owners were the first, but far from only, to seize the bait; by the end of 1977 the FCC approved a 4.5 meter dish which could be purchased for less than $10,000.[42] While other nations had begun satellite television distribution earlier than the USA, the purchasing power of the USA market was the necessary global catalyst to begin the downward spiral of earth station pricing until the entry price dropped below $2,000 at the end of the

(November 1988), 35+.

[42]"The Rise of American Pay-TV," *Economist* 29 July 1978, 62+; "The Wiring of America," *Economist* 20 June 1981, 56+.

decade. Falling prices stimulated demand, which stimulated manufacturing, which increased competition, and drove prices down again.[43] A particularly important factor in accelerating this cycle in the early 1980s was the disposable income of American farmers; one dish salesman in 1984 observed "the two most important possessions a farmer owns today are his diesel tractor and his satellite dish" and dish manufacturers geared toward big end-of-year sales and the flush of income from harvest season.[44]

This market totally transformed the economics of earth stations, shifting the focus from supplying a small group of buyers (usually national governments) with very large dishes and augmenting that market with a new market of many buyers for small dishes. In a way similar to the sinking of the Titanic in 1912 spurring worldwide growth in the manufacture and sale of radio equipment,[45] the HBO move to satellite distribution was a catalyst that changed the availability of earth stations at not only a national, but simultaneously, a global level. National, because the focus was on the USA market; but simultaneously global, because the development of the USA market for earth stations was an indispensable factor in the globalization of earth stations. Only the USA market had enough potential purchasers in its then 3,000—4,000 cable outlets to justify the retooling of extant manufacturers and the emergence of new manufacturers to meet demand, and thus the globalization of earth stations could not take place until and unless the Americanization of earth stations also took place.[46] Nixonian policy and family farm income drove the process.

In the 1970s, therefore, the world conceptualization and practice of satellite technology shifted from a vision of very large projects involving a limited number of users (national and international telephony; surveillance by the superpowers; "big science" in the form of manned space explorations) to a vision of many small projects joining the large projects, and literally millions of new users. The

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[43]This may be the moment at which the television industry began to reverse its historical pricing trajectory which heretofore resembled the pricing patterns of traditional industrial goods such as automobiles (you pay more to get the same basic product each year) and launched a postindustrial trajectory now common in electronic consumer goods (you pay less to get the same basic product each year).

[44]"An Eye On The Sky," *Forbes* 5 November 1984, 196+. This quote reminded me of the introduction of radio to Fiji in 1925, when a local newspaper observed "when conditions are favorable, the air is literally crowded with American stations. . . the joys of a good receiving set far outweigh the ownership of a motor car." For the relevant citation, see Schwoch, *The American Radio Industry*, ch. 4, note 69.

[45]Because the world agreed in the aftermath of the incident that better planning and use of radio equipment could save lives at sea, and thus nations required its use for approved registry of ocean-going vessels, meaning all sorts of people suddenly had to go out and buy equipment, creating a boom market.

[46]The only exception, of course, could have taken place in the USSR, where a command economy could conceivably have chosen to accelerate the manufacture and distribution of earth stations. Needless to say, this did not occur, no doubt because the idea of decentralization and increased availability of television signals and telecommunications services would have been anathema to the Brezhnev regime. Canada had begun satellite television distribution earlier than the USA but did not have a sufficiently large population to serve as global catalyst for manufacturers to make the transformation to small-scale low cost earth stations. The other large landmass/large population nations (India, Brazil, China, Indonesia) had neither the sufficient per-capita television households nor the consumer disposable income. Note how the videocassette is developed in small landmass/large population nations with sufficient consumer disposable income (Japan) concurrent with the shift in satellite technology. There do seem to be correlations between landmass/ national borders, population density, consumer disposable income, and the comparative emergence of new television technologies in the 1970s.

growth of earth station installations by American cable television outlets is the determinant factor in this process.[47] However, the most fascinating developments of this entire process are the developments which were totally unforeseen: the purchase of earth stations by parties other than cable television operators and the reception of American television in areas other than the geographic boundaries of the USA. No one at the time really gave much thought to the possibility that, say, a hotel in Belize City, a home in the Amazon or Yukon, or a restaurant in Monterrey could just as easily pick up the signal as a cable operator in Peoria.

American television was already well known around the world by this time, and in many nations represented the majority of broadcast hours.[48] But the distribution of American television was done through the conceptualization of individual nation-state units—the export market. The people of Sao Paulo, for example, in viewing an American program did so through a process whereby the program was sold by an American corporation to a Brazilian television broadcaster and exported (and a copy, usually on 16mm film at this time, was shipped) from the USA to Brazil in accordance with import/export regulations and agreements. The Brazilian broadcaster then aired the imported program. Everything about the process was defined and understood in discrete nation-state units. Heretofore there were only a few places in the world (such as the USA-Canada border) that had historically experienced the disrupture of the conveyance of television through nation-state units because signals crossed nearby borders. PAL and SECAM effectively protected the (geopolitical rather than national) borders of Cold War Europe in this regard, because nearby signals from the "other side" were technically incompatible with receiving sets.[49]

The satellite now theoretically meant that, as far as television goes, if any borders still existed, they were all nearby and no longer distant. Furthermore, rather than relying on 16mm film prints and other pre-recorded materials, satellite transmissions also opened the possibility of a new round of real-time transmissions to television viewers across national borders. In some ways, a long historical view through the dual lens of broadcasting and area studies returns us to one of the oldest and most enduring visions of information technology: the conquest of time and space.

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[47] I am ordinarily the last one to offer single-event causality, but here I think it justified.

[48] See, for example, Tapio Varis, *International Flow of Television Programmes* (Paris: UNESCO, 1985).

[49] France and Belgium were too far away from the nearest Eastern European SECAM broadcast systems to reciprocally receive transmissions; note how well the fragmentation of Germany served Cold War bipolar television interests.

Ronald Reagan and Freedom of Expression: From Liberal to Industry Spokesman, 1945-1952

Stephen Vaughn*

When Ronald Reagan testified as a friendly witness before the U. S. House Committee on Un-American Activities in October, 1947, he quoted Thomas Jefferson and hoped it would not be necessary to outlaw any organization, including the Communist Party, on the basis of ideology. His testimony made a hit with many liberals. James Loeb, the executive secretary of the Americans for Democratic Action, considered Reagan the "hero" of the hearings and recruited him into the ADA. There was every reason to believe at the time that the actor was sincere. Privately when interviewed by FBI agents, he condemned HUAC's methods. When the motion picture industry blacklisted the Hollywood Ten, Reagan at first questioned this step and criticized the producers for caving in to public pressure.[1]

Yet less than four years later, when HUAC returned to investigate Hollywood in the spring of 1951, the committee found few more ardent supporters than Reagan. By then, he had become militantly anti-Communist, a champion of loyalty oaths, and a leader in encouraging former Party members to purge themselves. His attitude about the blacklists had hardened. Many of their victims, he argued, were "actually working members of a conspiracy by Soviet Russia against the United States.[2]

Reagan's political attitudes changed significantly during the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 1947, he was still a "hemophilic liberal" who "bled for causes." His politics ran parallel to those of fellow actor, Melvyn Douglas. Douglas, a thoughtful performer who drew inspiration from the philosopher Morris Cohen, believed a central component of liberalism was freedom of thought and the right to question accepted wisdom. But Douglas and Reagan traveled different paths

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[1]Quotation ("hero"), James Loeb, Jr. to Mrs. Hamilton von Breton, Oct. 25, 1947, Folder: "Los Angeles Chapters, Corr. 1947, Aug.-Dec.," Box 4, MSS/3/3, Americans for Democratic Action Papers (hereafter cited ADA Papers), State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison (hereafter cited as SHSWM). Also, Testimony of Ronald Reagan, Oct. 23, 1947, "Hearings Regarding the Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry," *Hearings before the Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1947), 217 (hereafter cited as *Hearings...* 1947). Reagan believed that the unfriendly witnesses should have been allowed to read their prepared statements.

[2]Quotation ("conspiracy"), Ronald Reagan, with Richard G. Hubler, *Where's the Rest of Me?* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1965), 201.

during the late 1940s. By 1952, the year Reagan severed relations with Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc. and stepped down as president of the Screen Actors Guild, he had all but abandoned his earlier New Deal liberalism. He had become an industry spokesman. Although he still sometimes called himself a "liberal," his was a liberalism that had more in common with Eric Johnston, then president of the Motion Picture Producers of America (MPPA) than with Douglas. It was a philosophy that emphasized anti-communism, spreading the American way of life, and United States participation in global affairs. Freedom to express controversial political ideas had come to occupy a place of secondary importance in his worldview.[3]

When Reagan received his discharge from the military in 1945, he was fascinated with politics and vaguely dissatisfied with being only an actor. He returned to Hollywood with a naive idealism. "I expected a world suddenly reformed," he said. He assumed that the war had brought a "regeneration of mankind.[4]

At first he lent his name and time to several left-of-center organizations and causes. In December 1945, he spoke at a dinner with Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas, the novelist Thomas Mann, and Harvard astronomer Harlow Shapley. The speakers warned about the dangers of atomic power and called for world unity. Reagan's contribution was a dramatic reading of Norman Corwin's poem, "Set Your Clock at U-235." In the months following the war, Reagan was also "hell bent on saving the world from neo-Fascism." In September 1946, he participated in a radio program called Operation Terror, which deplored the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in southern California. The December dinner had been sponsored by the Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions (HICCASP), and the radio production by Mobilization for Democracy. Both organizations were at the time under investigation by the FBI, and California's Un-American Activities Committee (the Tenney Committee) soon branded them communist fronts. Reagan was also linked to other left-wing groups thought to be fronts and the FBI, suspicious of his intentions, compiled a dossier on him.[5]

Several "hard-nosed happenings" in 1946 began to weaken Reagan's attach-

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[3]Quotations, Reagan, *Where's*, 139. This essay stops in 1952 — a watershed year for Reagan. Not only did Reagan sever his fifteen-year relationship with Warner Bros. that year and relinquish the SAG presidency, but he married Nancy Davis, and began a transition to television which eventually led to him hosting the General Electric Theater in 1954. An additional reason for ending this article in 1952 is that the primary documents necessary for studying Reagan's early life begin to trail off significantly after that date. This piece is based on more than fifteen archival collections.

[4]Quotations, Reagan, *Where's*, 139.

[5]The Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy listed Reagan as a sponsor and the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee used his name, apparently under false pretenses, to raise money. The Tenney committee also listed the American Veterans Committee as a front. On HICCASP, see *Third Report, Un-American Activities in California, 1947* (Sacramento: Report of the Joint Fact-Finding Committee to the Fifty-Seventh California Legislature, 1947), 34; and *Sixth Report,... 1951*, 59 and 289. On the AVC, see *Third Report, 1947*, 231. On the Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy, see *Sixth Report,...1951*, 276-80, 289. On the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee, see *Third Report,... 1947*, 45. On Mobilization for Democracy, see ibid., 34, 45-62; and *Sixth Report,...1951*, 58. Information on the December, 1945, dinner is found in Boxes 2 and 10 of the Hollywood Democratic Committee (HICCASP) Papers (hereafter cited as HICCASP Papers), SHSWM. For Operation Terror, see transcript of broadcast, Sept. 9, 1946, KLAC Los Angeles, attached to Memorandum, SAC, Los Angeles to Director, FBI, Sept. 20, 1946, File No. 100-343748, Ronald Reagan File released under Freedom of Information Act (hereafter cited as Reagan File, FBIFOIPA), SHSWM. Quotation ("hell-bent"), Reagan, *Where's*, 141.

ment to left-wing politics. A controversy arose in the Screen Actors Guild over whether to support a tri-guild council of actors, directors, and writers. At issue was the adoption of a noncommunist resolution. Reagan, who rejoined SAG's Board of Directors in early 1946, sided with conservative president George Murphy and his successor, George Montgomery, who wanted the Guild to take a stand against communism. Many of those in the Screen Writers Guild (several were prominent members of HICCASP) opposed the resolution and the tri-guild alliance never materialized although SAG did go on record opposing communism in June. A few weeks later Reagan, Olivia De Havilland, and James Roosevelt precipitated a crisis in HICCASP over passage of a similar resolution. There Reagan crossed swords with John Howard Lawson, Dalton Trumbo (both later members of the Hollywood Ten) and two-time Nobel Prize winner Linus Pauling. Reagan and other anti-Communist liberals resigned from HICCASP and eventually gravitated toward the Americans for Democratic Action.[6]

These developments took place against a background of sometimes violent labor unrest in Hollywood. A series of strikes at Warner Bros. and other studios, first begun in 1945 and renewed in 1946, forced Reagan and the Screen Actors Guild to choose sides between two rival groups, the Conference of Studio Unions (CSU) and the AFL-affiliated International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IA). The CSU, led by an ex-boxer named Herbert K. Sorrell, picketed the studios. It had the support of HICCASP, many writers, and received money from the Communist Party. The IA, led by Richard Walsh and the vehemently anti-Communist Roy Brewer, controlled the movie projectionists and had the power to close down the exhibition of pictures. The producers and SAG sided with the IA and conspired to break the CSU. Reagan, who was elected SAG's Third Vice President in September 1946, was a leader in the effort to break the picket lines and in fact rode studio buses through the lines during the filming of his movie *Night Unto Night* in September and October. On one occasion an anonymous caller threatened to disfigure his face and Reagan began carrying a loaded pistol for protection. His leadership during the strike played an important role in his being selected in March 1947, to fill out Montogomery's term as SAG president when the latter resigned. It also won for Reagan the enmity of Hollywood's left wing.[7]

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[6]Quotation, Reagan, *Where's*, 142. For the debate on the tri-guild alliance and anticommunist resolution, see SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, Feb. 18, 1946, 2990-90D, Screen Actors Guild Archive (hereafter cited as SAGA); ibid., March 18, 1946, 2978-79; ibid., April 1, 1946, 2986; ibid., April 29, 1946, 3000; ibid., May 13, 1946, 3008; ibid., May 27, 1946, 3016; ibid., June 10, 1946, 3019, 3021-22; and press release for June 17, (1946), SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, 3024, SAGA. See also Executive Board of SWG to Board of Directors, SAG, March 20, 1946, 2990-90D. On the split within HICCASP, see HICCASP Papers, Boxes 2, 3, and 10, SHSWM; Folder: "Trumbo Correspondence" (Jan. 1-Dec., 1946), Box 1, Dalton Trumbo Papers, SHSWM; Testimony of Ronald Reagan, July 1, 1955, *Jeffers v. Screen Extras Guild*, July 1, 1955, 3398-400, State of California, Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, Los Angeles (hereafter cited as SCCA-SAD); Reagan, *Where's*, 166-69; and Ronald Reagan, *An American Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 111-14.

[7]For Reagan's admission that he crossed picket lines, see Bill McGoogan, Jr., "How the Commies Were Licked in Hollywood," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, Features Section, undated, clipping in Folder: "Industry Anti-Communist Record," Box 55, Dore Schary Papers, SHSWM; and Testimony of Ronald Reagan, July 1, -1955, *Jeffers v. Screen Extras Guild*, 3392, SCCA-SAD; also ibid., 339495. For *Night Unto Night* shooting schedule, see "Chronology of Feature Motion Pictures Produced between January 1, 1943 and Dec. 31, 1948," Folder: "Strike Correspondence — General," Box 2734, Warner Bros. Archive of Historical Papers, University of Southern California,

By 1947 then, Reagan had separated himself from Hollywood's far left wing but he still considered himself a liberal. His politics were not unlike those of his friend Melvyn Douglas. Douglas tried to clarify liberalism in June, using Cohen, whose *Faith of a Liberal* had appeared the previous year. "Liberalism is too often conceived as a new set of dogmas taught by a newer and better set of priests called 'liberals,'" he said quoting Cohen. "Liberalism is an attitude rather than a set of dogmas — an attitude that insists upon questioning all plausible and self-evident propositions, seeking not to reject them but to find out what evidence there is to support them rather than their possible alternatives. This open eye for possible alternatives" unsettled virtually all conservatives and revolutionaries. The liberal's voice, Douglas said, using his own words, contrasted with the "laissez-faire reactionary capitalist," with the "voice of his economic opposite, the Marxist communist," and the "voices of the religionists" — Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish fundamentalists. Douglas endorsed representative government, free speech, and access to information.[8]

Both Reagan and Douglas participated in the American Veterans Committee and the Americans for Democratic Action. The AVC became one of the most liberal of the postwar veterans organizations. Like HICCASP, it advocated reform. Reagan found it attractive because it asked members to "be citizens first and veterans afterward." He "expected great things" from it, together with Douglas helped form one of its Hollywood chapters, and became a "large wheel" in its affairs. But when dissension plagued California's AVC, Reagan and Douglas joined with anti-Communists in fifteen southern California chapters who formed a Progressive Caucus in early 1947 to oppose the state's left-wing leadership. Believing liberalism was "on a desperate defensive everywhere," its members insisted the state AVC support a resolution condemning communism and advocated eliminating "endless debate" and "doctrinaire approaches to information." In

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Los Angeles (hereafter cited as WBAHP-USC). See also *Los Angeles Daily News*, Sept. 28, 1946, 1 and 3; *New York Times*, Sept. 28, 1946, 3; *New York Times*, Oct. 1, 1946, 3; and ibid., Oct. 3, 1946, 3. See also Resolution, SAG Minutes, Sept. 23, 1946, 3096, SAGA; and ibid., 3095; letter to be released Sept. 19, 1946, to "Dear Member" from Board of Directors, Screen Actors Guild, see SAG Minutes, Board of Directorsi 3098-98B, SAGA; and ibid., Sept. 30, 1946, 3101; and SAG Minutes, Special Meeting, Board of Directors, Sept. 17, 1946, 3090-91.

For the Hollywood strikes, see Box 9, HICCASP Papers, SHSWM. See also George H. Dunne, "Christian Advocacy and Labor Strife in Hollywood" (Interview conducted by Mitch Tuchman, 1981) (Los Angeles: Regents of the University of California, 1981); (Herbert K. Sorrell), "You Don't Choose Your Friends: The Memoirs of Herbert Knott Sorrell" (Oral History Project, UCLA) (Los Angeles: Regents of the University of California, 1963); Larry Ceplair & Steven Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood: Politics in the Film Community, 1930-1960* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1980), 216-25; Dan E. Moldea, *Dark Victory: Ronald Reagan, MCA, and the Mob* (New York: Viking, 1986), 65-72; and Garry Wills, *Reagan's America: Innocents at Home* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987), 224-40. In addition, see Nancy Lynn Schwartz, *The Hollywood Writers' Wars* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 221-24, 226-29, and 243-53; Jack Dales, "Pragmatic Leadership: Ronald Reagan as President of the Screen Actors Guild" (Interview Conducted by Mitch Tuchman), (Los Angeles: Regents of the University of California, 1981), 10-16, 20; David F. Prindle, *The Politics of Glamour: Ideology and Democracy in the Screen Actors Guild* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 40-49. For Reagan's recollections, see *Where's*, 126-85. For background to the dispute between the IA and CSU, see Louis B. Perry and Richard S. Perry, *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 332-37.

[8]Morris R. Cohen quoted by Melvyn Douglas in 'Liberalism," speech to Progress Meeting of National Council for a Permanent FEPC, June 4, 1947, 2, Folder: "Speeches and Articles, 19411947," Box 10, Melvyn Douglas Papers, SHSWM. See also, Morris R. Cohen, *The Faith of a Liberal: Selected Essays* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1946), 437-38. For Douglas' quotations, see Douglas, "Liberalism," 1-2, 4 and 5.

April 1948, Reagan's Hollywood chapter voted to withdraw support from both the state and Los Angeles area AVC councils. By June, a California Committee for a National AVC had superseded the Progressive Caucus. Reagan and Douglas signed the Committee's Declaration that condemned "totalitarian doctrines, both Fascist and Communist" and opposed communist efforts to influence the AVC.[9]

Douglas and Reagan helped organized the ADA in California. Loeb had recruited Reagan hoping that he would "win over the liberals of the stage and screen." When Douglas became the ADA's state chairman in early 1947, he and Reagan were among those who formed the Organizing Committee for Southern California. The ADA considered Reagan one of its "key persons" in the state and he attended conferences, assisted recruiting, and campaigned for Minneapolis mayor Hubert Humphrey in 1948.[10]

The House Committee on Un-American Activities hearings in 1947 devastated left-wing activism in the film industry. The investigations also created an intimidating climate that forced Reagan to reassess his liberalism. In May, HUAC conducted secret hearings in Los Angeles where Reagan's employer, Jack Warner, named several people he thought were "un-American." Most were writers; and some, such as Lawson, had been prominent on the picket lines. HUAC designated nineteen men "unfriendly" witnesses and called ten of them to testify at its public hearings in Washington in October (an eleventh, Bertolt Brecht, left the country after his testimony). In November, Johnston issued the Waldorf Declaration which blacklisted the Hollywood Ten (as they became known) from the industry.[11]

The Ten were interesting not only because they were the first men blacklisted after the HUAC hearings, but also because of the ideas they represented. All were, or had been, Marxist-Leninists and sympathetic toward the Soviet Union. But more than communism was at issue in the HUAC investigations. The Ten's appearance, the harsh treatment accorded them by the committee and movie industry, stimulated thinking about the First Amendment. The Ten's work, taken as a whole, sought to change popular attitudes toward working people, the poor, and minorities. It also attacked racism and discrimination. Some of the Ten condemned American foreign policy. Some used the past to justify their politics and

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[9]Quotations, Reagan, *Where's*, 141 ("citizens" and "wheel") and 165 ("expected"). Quotation ("defensive"), Oren Root, Jr., to Editor, *AVC Bulletin*, I (Oct. 1, 1946), 5. Root was a member of the AVC's National Planning Committee. Quotations ("debate" and "doctrinaire"), Theo. Robinson to Editor, ibid., II (Feb. 1, 1947), 5. Robinson was the chair of the Progressive Caucus at this time. Quotation ("totalitarian"), "Declaration of Cal. Committee For A National AVC," ibid., III (June, 1948), 3.

[10]Quotation ("liberals"), James Loeb, Jr. to Ronald Reagan, Oct. 25, 1947, Folder: "Corr. 1947, April-Dec.," Box 1, Series 3, ADA Papers, SHSWM. Reagan's name appears on several lists in the ADA Papers. In 1947 he was among those "People Who Attended [an ADA] Conference," was listed among the ADA's *"Key Persons — California,"* and was on the "California Organizing Committee, Americans for Democratic Action." See Series 3, No. 5, Reel #57 (microfilm), ADA Papers, SHSWM. See also Loeb, "Notes, Comments and Recollections on ADA...," 12, James Loeb, Jr. Papers, SHSWM. See also Jeri Despol to James Loeb, Jr., Oct. 16, 1947, Folder: "California — Los Angeles Chapter, Corr. 1947, Aug.-Dec.," Box 4, MSS/3/3, ADA Papers, SHSWM; *Los Angeles Daily News*, Oct. 4, 1947, clipping in ibid.; "Transcript of a 1948 Radio Broadcast," Pre-1966 Material, Ronald Reagan Collection, Hoover Institute, Stanford, CA. See also Ceplair & Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 144-47; and Allan H. Ryskind, *Hubert: An Unauthorized Biography of the Vice President* (New York: Arlington House, 1968), 114.

[11]Quotation ("un-American"), Testimony of Jack L. Warner, Oct. 20, 1947, *Hearings... 1947*, 12.

one (Lawson) called for a full-scale reinterpretation of American history. All saw cinema as a means of changing society, crucial in the "battle of ideas." Outcasts in their own time, their views would be widely accepted by many Americans two decades later.[12]

Publicly before the House committee, Reagan defended Hollywood and maintained that the industry had all but eliminated the communists. But he returned to California uneasy about the impact that negative publicity from the hearings might have on performers. Privately, he — like Douglas and the ADA — condemned HUAC's strong-arm tactics. In a meeting with the producers and later before SAG's Board of Directors, he questioned the wisdom of the blacklist.[13]

Studio heads knew the Waldorf statement would be controversial. To promote unity, representatives from the writers', directors', and actors' guilds met with members of the Association of Motion Picture Producers on December 3, 1947. There Louis B. Mayer and other executives explained that the problem was not a moral issue but one of getting back to business as usual. They expelled the Ten not because of qualms about communism but because of public pressure. When asked if the Waldorf Declaration came from a desire to fight communism or protect business, Mayer admitted that the producers' first obligation was "to protect the industry and to draw the greatest possible number of people into the theaters." The problem demanded prompt action because opinion had become inflamed. He did not know if the Ten were legally guilty and he would welcome them back if they took a noncommunist oath. But he would not risk offending the public.[14]

Other executives endorsed Mayer's position. Nicholas Schenck of Loew's was against communism but did not consider it "his business to take any action against Communists until they hurt his industry." Dore Schary of RKO noted that the discharged men had not been let go "because they were believed to be Communists" but because their actions "impaired their usefulness to the industry." Walter Wanger asked the guilds not to criticize the blacklist because the public assumed every communist was a Soviet agent and lack of unity would surely raise more questions about Hollywood's loyalty.[15]

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[12]Quotation from title, John Howard Lawson, *Film in the Battle of Ideas* (New York: Masses & Mainstream, 1953). I have tried to draw parallels between the work of the Hollywood Ten and the social and political movements of the 1960s and 1970s in "Blacklisting in the Film Industry: Another Look at the Hollywood Ten," in Francis G. Convares, ed., *Hollywood, Censorship, and American Culture* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Press, 1996).

[13]At Melvyn Douglas' suggestion, the California ADA paid for ads that appealed for due process, "cultural freedom," blamed HUAC for an atmosphere that impaired "originality and ingenuity," and said that "reckless attacks on liberals" strengthened claims that democracy was "a frail and frightened thing." Quotations, see ad, *Hollywood Reporter*, Oct. 15, 1947, copy in Folder: "General: ADA Clippings," Box 11, Melvyn Douglas Papers, SHSWM. See also Loeb to Reagan, Oct. 25, 1947, Folder: "California, Corr. 1947, April-Dec., 11 Box 1, MSS/3/3, ADA Papers, SHSWM. See also Loeb to Arthur, Nov. 1, 1947, Folder: "California, 16th Congressional District Chapter," Box 6, ibid. For Reagan's criticism of HUAC, see FBI Report (Los Angeles), Dec. 19, 1947, File No. 100-15732, re "Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry," 23-24, Reagan File, FBI-FOIA, SHSWM.

[14]Quotation, "Report of Joint Meeting of Boards of Directors of the Three Talent Guilds with Members of the Association of Motion Picture Producers," Dec. 3, 1947, SAG Minutes, 3415, 3415D, SAGA. See also ibid., 3415C. All quotations from report and not necessary exact words of the speakers.

[15]All quotations from "Report of Joint Meeting...," (Dec. 3, 1947], in SAG Minutes, 3415A, 3415D, SAGA.

Troubled, Reagan asked several questions at this meeting. What procedure would determine who was a communist? If someone was accused and denied the accusation, would his word suffice?

No screening procedure had been or would be set up, Mayer said. The matter would be left to the discretion of each producer who would be guided "only by what they know themselves" and not "by what anyone *tells* them."

What was the difference between firing the Ten and creating a blacklist, Reagan asked?

Schary said only that the Ten had been dismissed because their usefulness had ended and that the decision would be tested in the courts.

What would the industry do if the Thomas or Tenney committees branded someone a communist or un-American because he or she belonged to a front but the person, while admitting membership, denied communist sympathies?

It would take more than a committee to prove someone was a communist, Schenck declared. But if a congressional committee called an employee and that person refused to say if he or she was a communist, then he would dismiss the suspect.

Reagan noted that producers had been unwilling to fire communists before the October hearings unless proven subversives. Why the change, he wondered?

Because, Schary told him, the studios faced intense public pressure.[16]

A few days later Reagan reported to the Screen Actors Guild about the December 3 meeting and presented a statement he hoped the Board would adopt. The statement was consistent with the posture he had taken before HUAC a few weeks earlier. It criticized producers for caving in. "They probably regret having to take a course contrary to [the] laws of the State and Nation which specifically provide that employers cannot inquire into the political views of employees, nor can they discriminate against employees on the basis of political thinking." Liberty could not be "held in water tight compartments," he said. "Once suppression, backed by the pressure of fear, breaks down one bulkhead, the other compartments are soon flooded." The problem involved more than the Ten; it was about the future of the Guild. SAG had a duty to protect performers unfairly accused. He felt the Guild was in an untenable position. "We are urged to make ourselves lawmaker, judge and jury and to take punitive measures in direct contravention of the law." SAG would cooperate with law enforcement agencies, he said, but not assume their powers, for to do so "would be to adopt communist methods as a means of defeating Communism." He defined a position on communism: the Guild rejected not only the theory but the Communist Party's tactics, which ignored majority rule and fair play. While SAG could not legally deny members, he said, it could keep communists from power by requiring officers to sign the noncommunist affidavit required by Taft-Hartley.[17]

A majority of SAG's directors would not support this statement, and some argued that it might be construed as a defense of communism. Several feared a statement would risk further bad publicity. A motion to say nothing was nar-

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[16]Quotations, from "Report of Joint Meeting...," (Dec. 3, 1947], SAG Minutes, 3415A, SAGA; and ibid., 3415B. See also Testimony of Eric Johnston, Oct. 27, 1947, *Hearings... 1947*, 313.

[17]Reagan called for Congress to act. Quotations, "Statement Proposed by Ronald Reagan, Discussed at the Board Meeting of December 8, 1947, for Further Discussion at Special Meeting, December 12, 1947, SAG Minutes, 3414, SAGA. See also SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, Dec. 8, 1947, 3410-12, SAGA.

rowly defeated. Reagan's position had even less support, however. When a non-binding vote was later taken on his statement, the Board defeated it by a 2 to 1 margin.[18]

Reagan was forced to compromise and here George Murphy proved persuasive. "I owe a great deal to this cool, dapper guy who had to deal with me in my early white-eyed liberal daze," Reagan recalled. "There were some of our associates, I'm sure, who believed I was red as Moscow, but Murph never wavered in his defense of me even though I ranted and railed at him as an archreactionary."[19]

At the special Board meeting on December 12, Reagan again read a statement and Murphy at first moved that it be adopted but later withdrew the motion when Walter Pidgeon recommended the Board express its views privately to the producers. Murphy submitted a motion incorporating Pidgeon's suggestion and he and Reagan withdrew to draft a letter that softened Reagan's criticism of the producers. It did say, though, that SAG could not "support the producers in unilaterally making political belief a condition of employment." To act on that policy would be illegal. Yet the
letter promised cooperation with the executives and concluded that Congress should decide the CP's fate.[20]

As Reagan came to see the wisdom of cooperating with the producers, so he also provided the FBI with information about SAG members. The Bureau had several informers in the Guild and one, "Source T-9, a well-known motion picture actress," told an agent in early December that Reagan had "seen the light" and was trying to bar "radical members" from power. When interviewed later in the month, Reagan told the Bureau that he had been named to a committee, headed by Mayer, to "purge" communists. He thought that Mayer's committee was unsound because no one person or group had either ability or authority to determine unerringly who should be discharged. "Do they expect us to constitute ourselves as a little FBI of our own and determine just who is a Commie and who isn't?" he asked the agent.[21]

By December, Reagan had moved from the position he had taken the previous May when interviewed by Hedda Hopper. Then he had opposed banning the Communist Party and in October before HUAC he had not wanted to see any party forbidden on the basis of ideology. Now he agreed with Johnston and the producers that the only solution was for Congress to indicate that the CP was a "foreign-inspired conspiracy" and therefore illegal. Moreover, he wanted Congress to designate what organizations were communist-controlled so membership "could be construed as an indication of disloyalty." Without government leadership, Hollywood could hardly undertake "any type of cleansing of their own

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[18]The motion to say nothing failed 14 to 17. See SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, Dec. 8, 1947, 3411-12, SAGA. For the vote on Reagan's statement, which was defeated 10 to 20, see ibid., 3412.

[19]Quotations, Reagan, *Where's*, 179.

[20]Murphy's motion carried unanimously. The letter expressed sympathy for the attempt to eliminate subversives and repeated SAG's June, 1946, resolution opposing communism and fascism. See SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, Dec. 12, 1947, 3417-18, SAGA. Quotation, Board of Directors, Screen Actors,Guild to Motion Picture Producers Committee, Dec. 13, 1947, copy in SAG Minutes, 3422, SAGA.

[21]Quotations ("T-9," "light," and "radical"), FBI Report, Los Angeles, re "Communist Infiltration of Motion Picture Industry," Dec. 19, 1947 (LA 100-15732), 22, Reagan File, FBI-FOIA, SHSWM. See also ibid., 40. Reagan quoted ("purge" and "Commie") in ibid., 24.

household.[22]

In many respects the months following the HUAC hearings were a troubled period for Reagan and Hollywood. Reagan's growing conservatism owed much to circumstances of his private and professional lives. If his stock as an industry leader rose after the 1947 Congressional investigations, his marriage and acting career deteriorated. "I arrived home from the Washington hearing to be told I was leaving. I suppose there had been warning signs, if only I hadn't been so busy," he revealed. In his career, too, he was not encouraged by negative reviews of *That Hagen Girl* and *Voice of the Turtle* which appeared in November and December 1947. Pictures were hardly a secure business in the best of times and as he began his first full term as SAG president he seemed professionally "mired...in the never-never land between anonymity and success."[23]

His divorce from actress Jane Wyman took him by surprise and left him "shattered and ashamed." Since neither party has talked about the separation, much is left to speculation. Both were professional people but while Reagan's movie career stalled, Wyman's soared. She won an Academy Award for her role as a deaf-mute in *Johnny Belinda*. Wyman resented the time Reagan spent on political matters. She, however, often brought her work home with her, staying in character for weeks at a time, and was subject to wide mood swings. Some noted that after the divorce a "bitter quality...crept" into Reagan's rhetoric and beliefs, that he considered the breakup of his marriage a personal failure of ethics, and that he more and more came to see communists as betrayers of his political values.[24]

Morality may well have been an ingredient in Reagan's changing politics. Values he inherited from the First Christian Church explain, in part, why he moved away from New Deal liberalism and became intolerant of communism. In Dixon, he had spent considerable time in church-related affairs with his mother Nelle, and with the Rev. Ben Hill Cleaver. Indeed, for a time he was engaged to Cleaver's daughter, Margaret. Cleaver was staunchly anti-communist, a critic of the New Deal, and often fused Christianity with patriotism. "One thing I do know, " he told Cleaver after he became governor of California, "all the hours in the old church in Dixon (which I didn't appreciate at the time) and all of Nelle's faith have come together in a kind of inheritance without which I'd be lost and helpless." Likewise, Reagan's pastor in the Hollywood-Beverly Christian

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[22]Quotations, from FBI Report, Los Angeles (not necessarily Reagan's exact words), re "Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry," Dec. 19, 1947, 24 (LA 100-15732), Reagan File, FBI-FOIA, SHSWM. See also [Hedda Hopper], "Mr. Reagan Airs His Views," Grafic, Chicago Sunday Tribune, May 18, 1947, 7.

[23]Quotation ("home"), Reagan, *Where's*, 201. For reviews see, for example, *Time*, Nov. 10, 1947, 104, and ibid., Dec. 15, 1947, 103. Quotation ("mired"), Shirley Temple Black, *Child Star: An Autobiography* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1988), 407.

[24]Quotation ("ashamed"), Nancy Reagan, *My Turn: The Memoirs of Nancy Reagan* (New York: Random House, 1989), 108. Quotation ("bitter"), Laurence Leamer, *Make-Believe: The Story of Nancy & Ronald Reagan* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 160. See also Reagan, *Where's*, 202; Maureen Reagan, *First Father, First Daughter: A Memoir* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989), 43-45, 55, 68, 70-71, 79; Michael Reagan, with Joe Hyams, *On the Outside Looking In* (New York: Kensington Publishing Corp., 1988), 10, 24-26, 4148, 149, and 261-66; Lou Cannon, *Reagan* (New York: Perigee, 1982), 63-64; and Anne Edwards, *Early Reagan* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1987), 355. Reagan devotes only two sentences to his marriage with Wyman in Ronald Reagan, *An American Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 92.

Church in California, the Rev. Cleveland Kleihauer, was an unyielding critic of the welfare state and as early as 1946 had urged Reagan to speak out against communism. Reagan had a high regard for both Cleaver and Kleihauer and the liberalism of Douglas and Cohen which sometimes stressed the "dark side of religion" should have given him pause.[25]

But Reagan's public utterances during the period indicate that he rarely if ever talked about liberalism in these terms. Rather, the circumstances of his professional life provided a more immediate incentive to change. The HUAC hearings did more than ravage the industry's far left wing; they crippled "vital center" liberalism in Hollywood. "Believe me, the dilemma of the big box-office star has been considerable," writer Robert Ardrey wrote in late 1948. "No matter what his convictions, he risked his entire career by liberal activity." Reagan kept even the anti-communist ADA at arm's length, especially after it protested the government's loyalty programs and joined with the American Civil Liberties Union in March 1949, to demand a Senate investigation of FBI wiretapping. Loeb's hopes that the actor would help make southern California an important source of financial contributions were disappointed.[26]

The major part of Reagan's political activity during the late 1940s and early 1950s took place not in the ADA or AVC but in two much more conservative organizations: the Screen Actors Guild and the Motion Picture Industry Council. After he completed the remainder of Montgomery's term, SAG elected Reagan president in his own right in November 1947 — the first of five consecutive one-year terms. While SAG's board of directors had such liberals as Anne Revere, the balance of power rested with the well-known performers with high salaries (for example, in 1946 Reagan reportedly earned $169,750 and Montgomery $250,000). Most were conservatives, men like Montgomery and Murphy, or middle-of-the-roaders. As Reagan discovered in late 1947, there was little support in the Guild's inner sanctum for protecting the civil liberties of suspected communists.[27]

The MPIC was a new organization created in the aftermath of the HUAC hearings. Its goal was to restore Hollywood's reputation and it functioned primarily as a public relations agency. While each phase of movie industry was represented in the MPIC, the producers, who contributed two-thirds of the operating revenue,

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[25]On Reagan's attitude toward Cleaver and Kleihauer, Ronald Reagan, Interview with Author, Oct. 16, 1989. Quotation ("helpless"), "Dutch" (Ronald Reagan] to The Reverend and Mrs. Ben H. Cleaver, Jan. 4, 1973, Reagan-Cleaver Correspondence, Culver Stockton College Archive, Canton, MO. On Cleaver and the New Deal, see Ronald Reagan to The Cleaver Family, Dec. 16, 1974, ibid. On Kleihauer, see Reagan, *An American Life*, 106. Quotation ("dark"), Cohen, *Faith of a Liberal*, 337; see also ibid., 337-61; Douglas, "Liberalism," 2 and 6.

[26]See Office Memorandum, V. Keay to Mr. Fletcher, Nov. 29, 1949, 6, Americans for Democratic Action File, FBI-FOIA, SHSWM; see Confidential FBI report on Americans for Democratic Action, Nov. 29, 1949, 79-81 (100-347196-41), ibid. See also Memo, J. Edgar Hoover to Mr. Tolson and Mr. Ladd, (indexed Jan. 4, 1950), ADA File, FBI-FOIA, SHSWM; Loeb to Arthur, Nov. 1, 1947, Folder: "California, 16th Congressional District Chapter" (folder 1 of 2), Box 6, MSS/3/3, ADA Papers, SHSWM; James Loeb, Jr. to Mrs. Esther Murray, May 4, 1948, ibid.; and Alonzo L. Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), 389-90, and 494-95.

[27]On SAG see Prindle, *Politics of Glamour*, 16-33; Dales, "Pragmatic Leadership," 8, 20, and 43; Perry and Perry, *History*, 337-53; and Wills, *Reagan's America*, 218-22. For income categories of SAG members in 1948, see Hortense Powdermaker, *Hollywood, the Dream Factory* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1950), 209. For the salaries of Reagan and Montgomery in 1946, see *Variety*, Feb. 9, 1949, 7 and 15.

dominated. In the MPIC, Reagan joined other anti-communist liberals: Wanger, Schary, Brewer, Art Arthur, Allen Rivkin. They combined forces with conservatives like Cecil B. DeMille and Y. Frank Freeman, the Paramount executive who had once been head of the Pepsi Cola Corporation in Atlanta.[28]

SAG and the MPIC played a major part in Reagan's development as a politician. SAG gave him a national profile and leadership in a large organization. The MPIC provided proximity to producers and other industry executives. In SAG and the MPIC, Reagan participated in racial and labor issues, foreign policy and constitutional questions. Many of these matters brought him in contact with the federal government and some forced him to take a stand on freedom of expression. He defended Hollywood, combated communism at home and abroad, helped create and carry out a loyalty program, and emerged as one of the industry's most effective spokesmen.

All this occurred in a tense climate exacerbated by the Cold War and an economic crisis in Hollywood that forced retrenchment. A series of developments riveted attention on national security: Czechoslovakia became a Soviet satellite in early 1948; China fell to the communists in 1949, the same year the USSR exploded its first atomic bomb; a series of sensational espionage trials and the rise Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy captured headlines; and the Korean War began in June 1950. For those who worried about the spread of communism, Hollywood became a focal point, a "grand world-wide propaganda base" which, if controlled by Stalinists, could be used to subvert the American way.[29]

The motion picture industry experienced a crisis of its own. Declining movie attendance, breakup of studio theater chains, and reimposition of foreign quotas led to layoffs and talk of even more drastic cutbacks.[30] Mainly because of the generally adverse 14 economic climate, studios began dropping contract players in "huge numbers," SAG executive secretary Jack Dales recalled. Warner Bros. announced in early 1950, that it might cut personnel by half, a move that could have affected a thousand people. This news, combined with stories that cutbacks would be needed at Paramount, could hardly have been comforting to Reagan, the star of *That Hagan Girl*, who then was feuding with Jack Warner. Roy Obringer, the studio's legal secretary, made it clear the studio would not be unhappy if Reagan agreed to tear up the remainder of his contract.[31]

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[28]Information about the MPIC can be obtained from the Dore Schary Papers, Walter Wanger Papers, and the Herbert Biberman-Gale Sondergaard Papers in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, as well as in Art Arthur Papers and Cecil B. DeMille Papers in the Brigham Young University Archives, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as BYUA-P). The Minutes of the Board of Directors of SAG, located in the Screen Actors' Guild Archives, provide information on the interaction between that Guild and the MPIC.

[29]Quotation, Reagan, *Where's*, 162.

[30]Movie attendance declined markedly during this period, until by 1953 it was about half of what it had been at its peak in 1946. On declining attendance, see Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), 272 and 274; see also ibid., 269-85; Leonard J. Leff and Jerold L. Simmons, *The Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood, Censorship, and the Production Code from the 1920s to the 1960s* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990), 163-64; Douglas Gomery, "Television, Radio, and the 'Lost' Movie Audience," unpublished paper presented to the American Historical Association Meeting, Dec. 29, 1990, New York; and Arthur L. Mayer, "'COMPO' Formed to Combat Attacks on Filmdom," *New York Times*, Oct. 29, 1950, II, 5.

[31]Quotation, Jack Dales, "Pragmatic Leadership: Ronald Reagan as President of the Screen Actors Guild" (An Interview Conducted by Mitch Tuchman, 1981), 3, URL-UCLA. On Warner Bros., see *New York Times*, March 2, 1950, 33. On Paramount, see Thomas F. Brady, "Hollywood

Reagan's report to the Screen Actors Guild in 1950 indicated he was well aware of the precarious situation. Of the Guild's 7,000 members, only slightly more than 300 had the security of term contracts. Reagan later told Hubert Humphrey that most of the remaining 6,700 players were free lance performers who worked "from job to job, and studio to studio," usually for only a few days at a time. The overwhelming majority, he explained, made less than $5,000 a year (more than a quarter earned less than $3,000) and faced "a continual struggle for a modest livelihood." Hollywood had always been rife with uncertainties but during the late 1940s it became more so. It was an environment hostile to political risk taking.[32]

In his role as a leader in SAG and the MPIC, a central part of Reagan's work involved enhancing the status of actors. The HUAC hearings had heightened public suspicion of Hollywood performers. "Perhaps part of it was the thought of shelling out money at the box office to support some bum and his swimming pool while he plotted the country's destruction, " Reagan said. But public respect had been a problem before the blacklists. Even the most fortunate performers found themselves resented for their fame and wealth — "mocking affronts to the common man, vaguely wicked and unnatural manifestations of social inequity." Americans had long viewed actors with misgiving, considering them descendants of "rogues and vagabonds," attractive but at best amoral. "Like the whore," actors were "held in contempt but secretly envied." Even though this image was changing at mid-century, prejudice remained.[33]

MPIC leaders believed "drastic and affirmative action from within" was necessary. Soon after he became MPIC chairman in 1949, Reagan presided over a meeting at which the Council resolved to cooperate with law enforcement officials to rid Hollywood of its "scum fringe." The Council pledged to assist with "gumshoe activities of its own to help expose predacious elements that seek to invade the industry or to fasten upon the unwary among its members." The MPIC also turned to the personal conduct of Hollywood's "young and impressionable newcomers." It urged producers to be more vigilant and recommended studios offer courses in behavior so novice performers would be "more thoroughly schooled in their responsibilities as individuals both to the public and to the industry."[34]

Takes Stock," *New York Times*, March 12, 1950, II, 5. See also R. J. Obringer to J. L. Warner, Feb. 17, 1950, Folder 1, Ronald Reagan Contract Files, WBAHP-USC; and Obringer to Warner, May 26, 1950, ibid.

[32]Quotations ("job" and "continual"), Ronald Reagan to Hubert H. Humphrey, Aug. 17, 1951, copy in SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, 4138-38A, SAGA. See also Thomas M. Pryor, "Hollywood Digest," *New York Times*, Sept. 2, 1951, II, 5. The number of contract players at all movie studios dropped from 742 to 315 between March 1, 1947, and March 1, 1950, Reagan reported. For summary of Reagan's report, see Thomas F. Brady, "Hollywood Digest," ibid., Nov. 19, 1950, II, 5.

[33]Quotation ("bum"), Reagan, *Where's*, 200. Quotation ("mocking"), Leo C. Rosten, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, the Movie Makers* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company), 74. Quotations ("whore" and "envied"), Otto Fenichel, "On Acting," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 15 (1946), 156. Quotation ("rogues"), Benjamin McArthur, *Actors and American Culture, 1880-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 123. For the status of actors in American society, see also, ibid., 123-67; on the insecurities of Hollywood, see ibid., 36-37, 94-99, 113, 295, 302-03, 327-28. See also Prindle, *Politics of Glamour*, 8-10 and 56; Powdermaker, *Hollywood, the Dream Factory*, 254; and Ronald Taft, "A Psychological Assessment of Professional Actors and Related Professions," *Genetic Psychology Monographs* 64 (November 1961): 367, 371.

[34]Quotation ("drastic"), Fted Hift, "Leaders Seek Fair Deal for Hollywood," *New York Times*,

Reagan thought part of Hollywood's problem stemmed from reckless reporters. Reporting harped on the unpleasant, ignoring the industry's constructive side. He wanted the press to emphasize that the movie community consisted mainly of "hard-working, church-going family men and women" who rarely made the headlines and who "engaged in more charitable activities than any other group" of comparable size. He attacked the "irresponsible press" and "yellow journalism."[35]

In addition to criticizing the press and urging conformity for actors, Reagan's work for SAG and the MPIC touched on freedom of expression in other ways. One of these involved movie censorship, another the loyalty issue. On the former he encouraged greater freedom; on the latter he was rigidly intolerant.

Part of MPPA president Johnston's mission — and it became Reagan's too — was to support greater freedom from the industry's Production Code. The Code had been adopted in 1930 and attempted to bind movie entertainment to Judeo-Christian values. It was enforced by Will Hays (Johnston's predecessor), his lieutenant, Joseph Breen (a Catholic layman and former newspaperman), and the Roman Catholic Legion of Decency, which threatened to boycott offending pictures. Most producers did not want films tied to an independent standard of morality but rather wanted to let the public decide (as evidenced by its willingness to buy tickets) what would be shown. The Code's authority weakened significantly after World War II and in 1952 the U. S. Supreme Court in the so-called *Miracle* case, gave motion pictures protection for the first time under the First Amendment. Several of Reagan's films — *Kings Row* (1942), *Voice of the Turtle* (1947), *That Hagen Girl* (1947), *Night Unto Night* (1949) — had challenged the letter of the Code, if not its spirit. Reagan endorsed the idea that audiences should decide what could be seen. As a father, he told an audience in 1952 in Hartford, Connecticut, he agreed that children should be protected from obscenity, but he was "more concerned about the destruction of freedom than with vulgarity."[36]

During the early 1950s, Reagan and Johnston occasionally shared the same platform. Johnston was an apostle of capitalism and when he spoke about the relationship between the government and the economy he sounded much like a latter-day Ronald Reagan. Reagan found many of Johnston's ideas attractive. Defense of individualism and free enterprise, opposition to communism and statism, the Horatio Alger parable, enthusiasm for science and technology, optimism and insistence on the positive — all struck a responsive chord. Moreover,

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Oct. 30, 1949, II, 4. Reagan quoted ("scum") in J. D. Spiro, "Hollywood Acts, 11 ibid., Oct. 23, 1 949, II, 5; quotation ("gumshoe"), ibid. Quotation ("young") from MPIC, quoted in ibid. Quotation ("schooled"), ibid., Oct. 14, 1949, 34.

[35]Reagan quoted ("hard-working") in Hift, "Leaders Seek Fair Deal for Hollywood," 4. Quotations, *Variety*, March 14, 1951, 2 ("irresponsible") and 18 ("yellow"). Reagan' s defense of Hollywood and the integrity of actors is a consistent theme running through his work during the late 1940s and early 1950s. See, for example, Ronald Reagan, "Motion Pictures and Your Community, " *Kiwanis Magazine*, 36 (Aug., 1951), 25; and Ronald Reagan, "It's More Than a Jungle," *Variety* (Forty-eighth Anniversary issue), Jan. 6, 1954, 20.

[36]Reagan quoted in Anne Norman, "Reagan Good Film, Spokesman," *Hartford [CT] Times*, June 5, 1952, 16. See also Statement of Ronald Reagan, June 16, 1955, "Juvenile Delinquency (Motion Pictures)," *Hearings before the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955), 9296; and Stephen Vaughn, "Morality and Entertainment: The Origins of the Motion Picture Production Code," *Journal of American History*, 77 (June, 1990), 39-65.

Reagan liked Johnston's idea of using film as a weapon against communism, of a campaign to spread the American way throughout the world. Indeed, during the Korean War he helped the State Department prepare a plan to use motion pictures as propaganda.[37]

The Korean War forced Reagan to take a stand on loyalty tests. He willingly participated in preparing an oath for new employees. He criticized "confused" liberals who fronted for the far left or hesitated to "smoke out" communists. He desired to show "misguided actors and actresses the road back to America." Fighting communism, he concluded, required oaths, giving former Party members opportunity to purge themselves, and a Services Committee to help free-lance artists defend their reputations. He stood ready to help those who would recant. Any citizen who had been a Party member but who had "now changed his mind and is loyal to our country should be willing to stand up and be counted, admit 'I was wrong' and give all the information he has to the government agencies who are combatting the Red plotters." He welcomed HUAC's return to Hollywood in 1951.[38]

Accusations that Hollywood had not done enough to repudiate communism alarmed SAG leaders and studio executives during the summer and fall of 1950. The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Catholic War Veterans, Wage Earners Committee, Red Channels, and the Tenney committee compiled lists of alleged communists, called for boycotts, or otherwise tried to apply pressure. "It was open season for self-appointed guardians of Americanism," Schary recalled. How could persons clear themselves if accusers denied opportunity for refutation?[39]

Worries were well founded. "When the legion began its rather short reign of troublemaking," Schary remembered, Freeman, Harry Warner, and DeMille "chose that time to revive the question of loyalty oaths." Freeman said he would sign a loyalty pledge presented by anyone. Harry announced that while "he loved his brother Jack, he'd put a rope around his neck and drag him to the nearest police station if he learned he was a Communist. Jack got the only laugh of the evening," Schary recalled of one meeting, "when he said, 'Harry, that would be very uncomfortable.'" When Schary argued against an oath at an MPIC meeting, DeMille took notes that he allegedly threatened to give to Senator McCarthy.[40] Reagan wore two hats at this time, one in SAG, the other in the MPIC, and saw the matter as an industry-wide problem. He supported Freeman, Warner, and DeMille and told SAG in September 1950, that the MPIC was working out a plan with the State Department. He asked SAG to give the Council a chance.

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[37]See *Hartford [CT] Times*, June 4, 1952, 1; and Anne Norman, "Reagan Good Film Spokesman," ibid., June 5, 1952, 16. On Johnston' s views, see Eric Johnston, *America Unlimited* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1944); and Eric Johnston, *We're All In It* (New York: E. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1948). Also Ronald Reagan, Interview with Author, Oct. 16, 1989, Century City, Calif.

[38]Quotations ("confused" and "smoke"), Ronald Reagan, "How Do You Fight Communism?" *Fortnight*, Jan. 22, 1951. Reagan quoted ("misguided") in, McGoogan, "How the Commies Were Licked in Hollywood." Reagan quoted ("wrong") in Edwards, *Early Reagan*, 404 (n). See also FBI Report, Los Angeles, re "Communist Infiltration of the motion Picture Industry," Dec. 19, 1947, 24 (LA 10015732), Reagan FBI File, FBI-FOIA, SHSWM.

[39]Quotation, Dore Schary, *Heyday: An Autobiography* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 239.

[40]Quotations, ibid., 241; see also ibid., 238-41.

Some members had reservations but he convinced the Board to give the MPIC an opportunity to resolve the problem.[41]

He returned to SAG in October with a plan devised by the MPIC and the conservative Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals. He recommended a voluntary pledge and emphasized that the MPIC had decided against a mandatory program because communists, by nature deceitful, would willingly take an oath. The design was not perfect, Reagan admitted, but it might save some people already blacklisted.

The oath held the Soviet Union responsible for the Korean War, endorsed American and United Nations action, and rejected Stalinism:

> In support of our soldiers as they take their oath upon industry, I affirm that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America and that I will serve the United States honestly and faithfully against all its enemies.
>
> I hold Stalin and the Soviet Union responsible for the war in Korea. I support the resistance of the United States and the United Nations against this act of imperialist aggression.
>
> History having proved that Stalinism is totalitarianism, I repudiate its teachings and program, as I do those of every other form of dictatorship.

Reagan suggested a part whereby the signer volunteered to participate in such Americanism programs as those supported by the Crusade for Freedom. He gained SAG's support for this idea as well as for a "voluntary statement of affirmation."[42]

Not everyone in the industry was amenable to this pledge. The Screen Directors Guild split over the issue. In the wake of such controversy, the MPIC decided to scrap the oath and referred the matter to a committee that refined the program. Reagan presented a revised version to SAG in mid-December. This time Board members expressed more serious reservations, most feeling the program set up the MPIC as a tribunal and made members judges.[43]

HUAC's new hearings on Hollywood in spring 1951, temporarily overshadowed efforts to create an industry-wide loyalty program. The MPIC cooperated with the government. Convinced of a "clear and present danger," the Council offered in March to back any "legally constituted body" that had as "its object the exposure and destruction of the international Communist Party conspiracy." It warned those subpoenaed not to "stand on constitutional privileges," or to repudiate the authority of Congress. As the Council later put it in a letter to Congressman John S. Wood, "87,000 American casualties leave little room for witnesses to stand on the first and fifth amendments; and for those who do, we have

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[41]See SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, Sept. 12, 1950, 3973-74, SAGA.

[42]Quotations (pledge and "voluntary"), SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, Oct. 9, 1950, 3980, SAGA. See also Thomas F. Brady, "Hollywood Divided by Loyalty Pledge Issue," *New York Times*, Oct. 22, 1950, II, 5.

[43]See SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, Dec. 18, 1950, 4020; ibid., 4022 and 4029, SAGA. For Screen Directors Guild, see *New York Times*, Oct. 27, 1950, 25. See also ibid., Oct. 14, 1950, 13; ibid., Oct. 16, 1950, 30; ibid., Oct. 19, 1950, 26; Thomas F. Brady, "Hollywood Divided by Loyalty Pledge Issue," ibid., Oct. 22, 1950, II, 5; ibid., Oct. 24, 1950, 17; and Thomas F. Brady, "Hollywood Turmoil," ibid., Oct. 29, 1950, II, 5.

no sympathy."[44]

The Council did offer hope to persons who had consorted with communist organizations. If they would confess previous associations and prove conclusively they had utterly renounced such relations forever, the MPIC would help. But simply to renounce earlier deeds or affiliations was not enough. These people would be judged by subsequent actions.[45]

Reagan assumed a central role in implementing this policy. For those such as actresses Gale Sondergaard and Anne Revere, who would not acknowledge associations and name names, choosing to plead the fifth amendment, a blacklist awaited. For those such as the actor Sterling Hayden and director Edward Dmytryk, who confessed their affiliations, recanted ties to the Party, and named other Party members, rehabilitated careers lay ahead.

HUAC subpoenaed Revere and scheduled her testimony for mid-April. She had long been at odds with SAG's conservative wing. When Reagan discussed "cliques" sympathetic to the communist line with the FBI, Revere's name likely came up. In court testimony in 1955 he named her as a leader of SAG's left-wing faction during the strikes of 1945 and 1946. Others implicated her with the Communist Party. Brewer claimed she had been among those people on SAG's Board who opposed Reagan's effort to eliminate communists.[46]

Revere was a thoughtful person, a woman of courage and integrity. She resigned as SAG treasurer in 1947 rather than sign the noncommunist affidavit required by Taft-Hartley (the lone Guild officer to do so). She had not been a member of the CP in 1948, she claimed, nor a Party member when she appeared before HUAC in 1951. She feared her earlier associations in a "happier climate" would destroy her career. Undecided how to respond before HUAC, she asked SAG's Board for advice only to find little sympathy for her plight.[47]

Revere soon made up her mind. After listening to the hearings in Washington, she decided that what the committee wanted was names. "I would not hesitate to go to the FBI and repeat the names of any people who had indicated to me that they were disloyal, or would do harm to the country," she later said. But because she had "never known among these people a person disloyal in word or deed,"

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[44]Quotation ("casualties"), from letter by MPIC to Congressman John S. Wood, read into the record in September, 1951, before the start of the committee's Los Angeles hearings, reprinted in *Daily Variety* (Sept.?, 1951?), copy in Folder: "Industry Anti-Communist Record," Box 55, Dore Schary Papers, SHSWM. All other quotations, "Official Statement of the Motion Picture Industry Council re Hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee," March 21, 1951, ibid.

[45]"Official Statement...," March 21, 1951, Folder: "Industry Anti-Communist Record," Box 55, ibid.

[46]Names have been censored from Reagan's FOIA FBI file but see FBI Report, Los Angeles, re "Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry," Aug. 4, 1947 (LA 100-15732), quotation ("cliques"), 155 (about FBI April 10, 1947 meeting with Reagan and Wyman), Reagan File, FOIA-FBI, SHSWM; also ibid., 157. See also FBI Report, Los Angeles, re "Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry, Dec. 19, 1947 (LA 100-15732), 24-25, ibid.; and Office Memorandum, M. A. Jones to L. B. Nichols, May 23, 1951 (100-351326-5), ibid. See also Testimony of Ronald Reagan, July 1, 1955, pp.3382-83, *Jeffers v. Screen Extras Guild*, SCCA-SAD. See also Testimony of Larry Parks, March 21, 1951, "Investigation of Communist Activities in the Los Angeles Area — Part 6," *Hearings...*, 2303. See also Lee J. Cobb's testimony of June 2, 1953, ibid., 2349; and Testimony of Roy M. Brewer, May 18, 1951, re "Communist Infiltration of Hollywood Motion-Picture Industry — Part 2,11 *Hearings...*, 517.

[47]For Revere's denial of CP membership when she signed the noncommunist affidavit in 1948, see SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, May 28, 1951, 4095, SAGA; see also ibid., March 19, 1951, 4057. Quotation ("happier"), Interview with Anne Revere, Feb. 25, 1955, Folder 3, Box 69, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, SHSWM.

she could not in conscience give names.[48]

Unwilling to inform, understanding that a recent Supreme Court ruling made her vulnerable to contempt charges and prison if she answered some committee questions but not others, she took the fifth and first amendments. She made a brief statement charging the committee with sabotaging the American political system. The Communist Party was still not illegal, and she told the committee that "I consider any questioning regarding one's political views or religious views as a violation of the rights of a citizen under our Constitution, and as I would consider myself, therefore, contributing to the overthrow of our form of government as I understand it if I were to assist you in violating this privilege of mine and other citizens..., I respectfully decline to answer."[49]

Revere had won an Academy Award in 1945 for best supporting actress in *National Velvet.* She had been twice nominated for Academy Awards for *Gentleman's Agreement* and *The Song of Bernadette.* After she refused to testify, her agent told her she was "dead" as an actress. Actually, her career had started to decline after the Tenney Committee listed HICCASP as a front. She had worked only eight weeks in 1949. After her name appeared in Red Channels in 1950, her agent discovered that Paramount and Warner Bros. considered her too controversial to hire. Aware of her "altered status," she resigned from SAG's Board late May 1951.[50]

Not all people who appeared before HUAC found the experience harmful. Dmytryk was rehabilitated. He followed a procedure that Reagan and Brewer helped set up. When Dmytryk and other former Party members came to Brewer's office, they were turned over to ex-communist Howard Costigan who usually demanded that they go to the FBI. At the heart of rehabilitation lay public repentance. The ex-member would testify publicly and usually name names. He would denounce the CP at union meetings and make a statement — perhaps a magazine article — renouncing his position. Brewer managed to throw the influence of the Motion Picture Alliance behind this program. If the confession and rehabilitation satisfied the MPIC, an employer could be certain most conservatives would not oppose rehiring.[51]

Dmytryk followed this route. He knew many people on the MPIC. "All were interested in putting the whole business behind them," he recalled, "but it had to be done their way." They had several requisites, "some merely suggested as desirable, some absolute." The principal absolute was a second appearance before HUAC. After this testimony the *Saturday Evening Post* published a sympathetic article on the director. When Maltz attempted to discredit his story with a full-page ad in *The Hollywood Reporter*, the MPIC took out an ad. Signed by Reagan, Brewer, Dales, and others, it was a full-page letter entitled "You Can Be

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[48]Quotations, Interview with Anne Revere, Feb. 25, 1955, Folder 3, Box 69, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, SHSWM.

[49]Quotation ("violation"), Testimony of Anne Revere, April 17, 1951, re "Communist Infiltration of Hollywood Motion-Picture Industry — Part 2," *Hearings...*, 319.

[50]Quotation ("altered"), SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, May 28, 1951, 4095, SAGA. See also Interview with Anne Revere, Feb. 25, 1955, Folder 3, Box 69, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, SHSWM.

[51]See John Cogley, *Report on Blacklisting: I: Movies* (New York: Arno Press & New York Times, 1972), 84-85. See also Ceplair and Englund, *Inquisition in Hollywood*, 359.

Free Men Again!"[52]

What of new talent? Producers wanted assurances about whom they hired. Reagan and other MPIC members believed a voluntary program that used the Council's Patriotic Services Committee as a screening depot would solve the problem. But this plan required unanimous support before it could become MPIC policy, and the Screen Writers Guild objected. The writers were wary of any loyalty program originating with the MPIC because of the power likely to be given the producers. They assumed Johnston and the studio heads were too willing to accept lists from Legion, force conformity, and compromise basic freedoms.[53]

Reagan and most MPIC members did not share these misgivings. They worried most about criticism that the industry was not doing enough to stop communism. Their plan was to appease conservative groups pressing Hollywood, the most feared of which was the American Legion. The American Legion Magazine ran an article in late 1951 asking "Did the Movies Really Clean House?" No more than 300 card-carrying communists were in the film industry, the author said, but if one added "the longer list of Hollywood 'big names' who have collaborated with communist party organizations and enterprises without ever formally joining the party, we have a story of communist penetration...which is truly shocking." The article named sympathizers including Jose Ferrer, Judy Holliday, Edward G. Robinson, Zero Mostel, Henry Fonda. It listed movies worked on by "recently-exposed communists and collaborators." Coming on the heels of the Legion's attack was a HUAC report released in early 1952 that concluded Hollywood continued as "one of the principal sources of funds" for the American CP and that the "true extent of Communist infiltration and manipulation" was astounding.[54]

Reagan and the MPIC mounted a campaign in February and March to repair the damage. But the American Legion persisted and told members to use the HUAC report in attacks on Hollywood.[55] Determined to end "vigilante" assaults, boycotts, and picket lines, MPIC members wanted anyone under suspicion "to affirm their one hundred percent Americanism and their hatred of Communism." To help the process, they favored a committee "to screen on request, all applicants for employment regarding Communist affiliation or other charges which bring the industry into ill repute." Reagan endorsed these ideas, believed the need for the MPIC had "never been greater," and urged industry unity.[56]

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[52]Quotations (emphasis in original text), Edward Dmytryk, *It's a Hell of a Life But Not a Bad Living* (New York: Times Books, 1978), 145. See also *Saturday Evening Post* (May, 1951).

[53]See Schary, *Heyday*, 239. See also Minutes, Executive Board, Screen Writers Guild, Jan. 21, 1952, 5, Box 69, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, SHSWM.

[54]Quotations, J. B. Matthews, "Did the Movies Really Clean House?" *American Legion Magazine*, 51 (Dec. 1951), 13 ("penetration") and 51 ("collaborators"). See also ibid., 49 and 51-56. Quotations ("principal" and "extent"), *Annual Report of the Committee on Un-American Activities for the Year 1951* (Washington: Committee on Un-American Activities, Feb. 17, 1952), 8.

[55]Reagan moved that the Council produce newsreels to refute HUAC. Nationwide the MPIC encouraged exhibitors to approach local editors for favorable editorials. The Council supplied rebuttals to Washington sources and even some HUAC members agreed the committee's conclusions were unfair. See Reagan's Minutes of the Meeting of the Motion Picture Industry Council, Feb. 20, 1952, 4, Box 33, Arthur Papers, BYUA-P. For the MPIC's campaign against the HUAC report, see Chairmants Agenda, MPIC Membership Meeting, March 26, 1952, 4-5, Box 33, ibid.

[56]Quotations ("Americanism," "vigilante," and "greater"), Minutes, MPIC Executive Commit-

In May, Reagan, Freeman, and Brewer reviewed the recommendations made by the Patriotic Service Committee in December 1950. Freeman wanted to increase Council control over releasing statements prepared by people under suspicion. He and Brewer believed the Legion "really honest and sincere" in wanting to help. Reagan felt the problem would be helped by a stronger public relations effort highlighting the industry's anti-Communist record.[57]

In June, Reagan moved to make the Patriotic Services Committee a permanent clearing house for prospective employees. His plan was for free lance talent who wanted jobs and wished to know what was "being said about them." Such people would get in touch with their guild, which would then obtain any lists from the MPIC that existed. The Council would have on file "all information or misinformation wherever it has been recorded, including the American Legion material." The potential employee could write the Council, which would use the letter to straighten out inaccuracies." The plan was "wholly voluntary and the MPIC, Reagan explained, would not pass judgment on any claims of innocence. This agency, Arthur insisted, was "NOT [a] Loyalty Board" but a "Services Committee."[58]

When Reagan presented the plan to SAG in June, he emphasized pressure by local American Legion posts which compiled their own lists of suspicious people and mailed them directly to Legion headquarters. Legion leaders wanted studios to give them information on who should be boycotted. Reagan argued that his plan, while not perfect, would placate the Legion and be "more beneficial than harmful."[59]

Freeman offered indication about how far MPIC members would go to appease the Legion. He acknowledged that the Legion exercised power over Paramount decisions, that letters by studio employees written in self defense were passed to the Legion Commander and to the editor of *American Legion Magazine*. Asked if an explanatory letter would insure employment if the Legion continued to apply pressure, Freeman's answer was a terse "no."[60]

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tee, April 11, 1952, 3 and 4, Box 69, Biberman-SondergaardPapers, SHSWM. Quotation ("screen"), "The Objectives and Purposes of M.P.I.C. Shall be as Follows:...," attached to Adrian McCalman to Frances Inglis, April 4, 1952, Box 69, ibid.

[57]Freeman suggested that statements provided by individuals could be "furnished by the MPIC to any organization sanctioned by the Patriotic Services Committee which requests information about the individual without any additional authorization being required from the individual by the MPIC." Quotations, from Art Arthur's notes, dated May 27, 1952, of meeting of Exploration Subcommittee of Executive Committee, MPIC, May 20, 1952, copy in Folder 6, Box 69, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, SHSWM.

[58]The Patriotic Services Committee was to be made up of one representative from each member organization of the MPIC. The member organization would designate its own representatives. Reagan's plan would not have affected those already employed — if they encountered problems, they could avail themselves of the normal studio channels. See Reagan's Minutes of Meeting of the Motion Picture Industry Council, June 18, 1952, 3, Box 33, Arthur Papers, BYUA-P. Quotations, from "MPIC Resolution," [June 2?, 1952), Box 69, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, SHSWM. Quotation ("NOT") (emphasis in original text), Art Arthur to Howard Green, June 9, 1952, copy in ibid.

[59]Quotation ("beneficial" — from Minutes, not necessarily Reagan's exact words), SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, June 16, 1952, 4254, SAGA. Reagan suspected SWG might veto this plan and was willing for SAG to act on its own. See Reagan' s Minutes of the Meeting of the Motion Picture Industry Council, June 18, 1952, 2, Box 33, Arthur Papers, BYUA-P.

[60]Freeman's admissions were recounted to the SWG by McCall. Quotation, see Minutes, regular meeting, Executive Board, Screen Writers' Guild, June 2, 1952, Box 69, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, SHSWM. For list of organizations compiling names, see "Attention! SWG Members," June

When SWG president Mary McCall heard Freeman make this admission and listened to Reagan talk about a Services Committee, she was troubled. A strong-minded liberal, she disliked basing SWG membership on politics. She objected to expelling or disciplining members on basis of belief. No ideologue nor one to shrink from controversy, she had been willing to oppose both SWG's left wing and such anti-Communists as Howard Hughes. Most MPIC members considered her an obstructionist. With exception of SWG, virtually all the Council's constituent groups supported a loyalty program, with Reagan and SAG among its most enthusiastic backers.[61]

In many respects, the stand McCall took within the MPIC during the spring and summer of 1952, was reminiscent of the position Reagan assumed at the meeting of studio executives in early December 1947. How did one determine who was a communist, she asked? To accept a person's refusal to answer questions as proof of guilt turned justice upside down. An innocent person could plead the fifth amendment on principle, she argued, and it "would be indefensible" to condemn such action. She urged SWG not to contribute to "increasing contempt for due process." If a clearing procedure had only a one percent error, by "what moral right has the Guild to pillory the innocent even in so small a percent?" The Guild could gain a "clear conscience by not setting up a court.[62]

McCall found the answers that Reagan and his supporters gave confusing. How could one find out if one's name was on a list? How could one find out where the list originated?

McCall believed Reagan's plan seriously flawed. She doubted the MPIC intended to forego judging letters. She reminded Reagan at a MPIC Executive Committee meeting that he once said if someone's statement seemed unconvincing, he would not hesitate to say "This does not establish innocence." Brewer particularly alarmed McCall because he seemed willing to go beyond the Legion in his desire to "smoke out traitors."[63]

McCall worried about people who were not communists but "who felt no need to apologize for their lives." Such persons, Reagan reportedly told the writers, would be "on their own." As Arthur remarked, if the accused chose to treat attacks as "beneath contempt," that was their prerogative but they could hardly

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20, 1952, Box 69, ibid.

[61]See Minutes, Special Meeting, Executive Board, Screen Writers Guild, June 19, 1952, 2, copy in Folder 6, Box 69, BibermanSondergaard Papers, SHSWM. For SAG's support of the "Patriotic Services Committee" plan, see SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, June 2, 1952, 4245, SAGA; and ibid., June 16, 1952, 4254. During World War II, McCall chaired Hollywood' s War Activities Committee. On her opposition to the SWG's left wing, see Schwartz, *Hollywood Writers' Wars*, 100-02, 187, 211, and 262.

[62]McCall quotations (from Minutes, not necessarily McCall's exact words), Minutes, Special Meeting of Executive Board, Screen Writers Guild, April 28, 1952, 3 (see also ibid., 4), copy in Folder 5?, Box 69, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, SHSWM.

[63]Quotation ("innocence"), see Minutes, Special Meeting, Executive Board, Screen Writers' Guild, June 19, 1952, 1, copy in Folder 6, Box 69, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, SHSWM. Quotation ("smoke") (apparently a paraphrase of Brewer's exact words), ibid. See also Minutes, Regular Meeting, Executive Board, Screen Writers' Guild, June 2, 1952, (p. 3?], Box 69, ibid.; and Minutes, Regular Meeting, Executive Board, Screen Writers' Guild, June 23, 1952, 5, Box 69, ibid. Reagan protested that McCall had not summarized his thinking accurately. He and Brewer assumed they could recognize false statements and that the people who made them would have to be sent to the FBI to obtain clearance. See SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, June 16, 1952, 4254, SAGA.

claim later the industry should have defended them more vigorously.[64]

McCall also believed the plan bad union policy. It amounted to having employees tell employers about what organizations they had joined, in effect apologizing for their affiliations. Moreover, since each Legion post was independent, if they, or any other pressure group decided to slander the innocent or to picket, the MPIC could not offer protection. She called on executives to abandon this policy.[65]

The Screen Writers Guild invited Reagan to defend the MPIC plan in late June. Board members received written arguments for and against the proposal, with Rivkin taking the affirmative, McCall the negative. Reagan and Rivkin failed to make a case, and SWG's membership later vetoed the Services Committee.[66]

McCall delivered the results to a disappointed Reagan in mid-July. Reagan wanted to know if she had a better plan and accused the writers of "confused thinking." "There seems to be a new breed around town, the anti-anti-Communists," the *Daily Worker* reported him saying. "These are the non-Communists who denounce anyone out to get the Communists. Lots of people in our community don't realize their thinking is dictated, in that it was implanted by the Communists a few years ago. Their minds need reconditioning.... If the guilty themselves stand exposed, that's just too bad.... A committee such as was proposed would have brought the records up to date."[67]

The one Reagan film that best reflected the actor's (and Hollywood's) retreat from civil liberties was *She's Working Her Way Through College*, a 1952 remake of Warner Bros.' *The Male Animal* (1942), which starred Henry Fonda and Olivia de Havilland. The earlier picture, based on the story written in 1939 by James Thurber and Elliott Nugent, had defended academic freedom. It involved an English professor (Fonda), who defended the right to express unpopular views by reading a letter written by Bartolomeo Vanzetti, the anarchist, who along with Nicola Sacco, had been electrocuted for allegedly murdering a paymaster in South Braintree, Massachusetts. "You can't suppress ideas because you don't like them — not in this country — not yet," Fonda's character said.[68]

By 1952 Vanzetti's words had become too controversial for Hollywood. A decade earlier Warner Bros. had been largely faithful to the Thurber and Nugent play,

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[64]Quotations ("apologize" and "own"), Minutes, Regular Meeting, Executive Board, Screen Writers Guild, June 2, 1952, copy in Folder 6, Box 69, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, SHSWM. Quotation ("contempt"), Art Arthur to Howard Green, June 9, 1952, 3, copy in Folder 6, Box 69, ibid. See also Minutes, regular meeting, Screen Writers Guild, June 2, 1951, copy in ibid.

[65]See "McCall Statement," July 3, 1952, copy in Folder 6, Box 69, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, SHSWM. See also Minutes, Regular Meeting, Executive Board, Screen Writers Guild, June 2, 1952, p. 4, copy in Folder 6, Box 69, ibid.; Minutes, special meeting, Executive Board, Screen Writers Guild, June 19, 1952, pp. 1-2, copy in Folder 6, Box 69, ibid.; and Minutes, Regular Meeting, Executive Board, Screen Writers Guild, June 23, 1952, pp. 5-6, ibid.

[66]See Minutes, Regular Meeting, Executive Board, Screen Writers Guild, June 23, 1952, p. 5, copy in Folder 6, Box 69, ibid.; and statements by McCall and Rivkin, dated July 3, 1952, copies in ibid.

[67]See Minutes, Regular Meeting, Executive Board, Screen Writers Guild, July 28, 1952, p. 1, copy in Folder 6, Box 69, ibid.. Reagan quoted in *Daily Worker*, July 30, 1952, p. 7, copy in Reagan File, FBI-FOIA, SHSWM.

[68]Dialogue from James Thurber and Elliott Nugent, *The Male Animal: A Comedy in Three Acts* (New York and London: Samuel French, 1939, 1940, 1941), (Act III), pp. 129-30. Also Elliott Nugent, *Events Leading Up to the Comedy: An Autobiography* (New York: Trident Press, 1965), 135.

although Nugent had to add dialogue to satisfy Hal Wallis and Jack Warner that the professor was "definitely anti-Communist." In 1952, the studio transformed the Thurber/Nugent scenario into a musical.[69] Reagan assumed the role that Fonda had earlier filled. The studio added an additional character who became central to the plot. Virginia Mayo played a burlesque dancer who decided to abandon this work for a college education and a writing career. The issue became not academic freedom but the right of a woman, a performer with a dubious background, to attend college. Whereas Fonda's character supported the right to discuss controversial ideas, Reagan's character defended entertainers and the acting profession:

> Apparently the only reason she is unacceptable is because she worked in show business. There have always been those who believe...that the people in show business are different from the rest of us.... We are asked to believe that her previous occupation is sufficient reason to risk the establishment here and now of a precedent which may lead tomorrow to the barring of students because they go to the wrong church, come from the wrong side of the tracks, or were born in the wrong country.... I cannot participate in this injustice....[70]

Here, one might say, "art" imitated life for the film paralleled what Reagan had been doing as president of the Screen Actor Guild and a member of the MPIC.

As *She's Working Her Way Through College* played in Oregon, Reagan spoke in Portland to the American Newspaper Guild which praised him for leading the fight against communism in Hollywood. "It was like the truce talks at Panmunjom," Reagan said. "But we beat them by making democracy work." A few months later he told SAG that the Guild had done more than any union to rid itself of communists and done so without allowing them access to the press. He remained critical of producers who hired "people suspected of communist tendencies." On the whole, though, he felt Hollywood could be a model for other industries.[71]

While Reagan apparently had few, if any, second thoughts about Hollywood's attempts to establish a loyalty program, others who participated did. Schary regretted his part. Leonard Spigelgass confessed "it was the most wrongheaded thing I did in my whole life. We did it because we thought we could help people who were accused of being Communists." Dales also had reservations. "What I have debated about since, " he said in 1979, "is that so many people were tarred by that brush who I don't think should have been now.... Even at the time, I'm saying my doubts came to the fore. I was not Ronnie Reagan or Roy Brewer.... I would argue about how far we were going, particularly when it got to be this clearing depot, you know, for work." People who had differed from the majority in SAG and the MPIC had been treated unjustly. They had not been communists but simply "strong liberal people who took their lumps." Someone should have prevented the producers from pushing matters to "ridiculous extremes," Dales

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[69]See Nugent, *Events Leading Up to the Comedy*, 159 and 260.

[70]Quotation from the film, located in Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

[71]Reagan quoted ("truce"), *Portland Oregonian*, July 9, 1952, 11. See also *New York Times*, July 12, 1952, 14. Quotation ("tendencies"), SAG Minutes, Board of Directors, March 9, 1953, 4406, SAGA.

conceded. "A line should have been called."[72]

The Hollywood in which Reagan worked during the postwar era was a powerful propaganda center in the "battle...to capture the minds of men." Not only was communism at issue but so too was the depiction of race, sex, the family, and other matters that would later occupy center stage during the Reagan presidency. By 1952 Reagan had traveled far from the New Deal liberalism of his father, Jack, and from the days when he "idolized" Franklin D. Roosevelt. He had become an industry leader, one of its most effective speakers. Skilled in the techniques of public relations, he was an accomplished propagandist. He performed in a climate rife with insecurities, hostile to left-of-center politics. Hortense Powdermaker was not far off the mark when she beheld "economic...totalitarianism" where freedom of choice was absent and where high salaries made it "extremely difficult" for employees like Reagan "to do other than the bidding of the studio heads." Reagan adapted to this environment, indeed thrived in it. In the process, his commitment to freedom of expression waned and eventually became expendable.[73]

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[72]Spigelgass quoted in Leamer, *Make-Believe*, 160. Jack Dales quoted by Lary May, "Movie Star Politics: The Screen Actors,' Guild, Cultural Conversion, and the Hollywood Red Scare," in Lary May, ed., *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 145.

[73]Quotation ("battle"), Walter Wanger, "Tulsa Speech," (April 12, 1949), 1, Folder 4, Box 37, Walter Wanger Papers, SHSWM. Quotation ("idolized"), Reagan, *An American Life*, 66. Quotations, Powdermaker, *Hollywood, the Dream Factory*, 35 and 327.

Donna Allen and the Women's Institute: A Feminist Perspective on the First Amendment

Maurine H. Beasley*

Few individuals have spoken out on the need for women to exercise First Amendment rights to the extent of Donna Allen, founder and president of the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, a Washington feminist "think tank." During the last 20 years Allen delivered more than 50 speeches on the necessity for women to change communications to such diverse forums as the University of Virginia Law School and the National Women's Party. For 15 years Allen published *Media Report to Women*, a newsletter that reported what women were doing within the communications field. A monthly publication for 11 years and a bimonthly for five, *Media Report* detailed the activities of women within both the commercial and the noncommercial media. The institute also published directories of media women combined with annotated, cumulative indexes to *Media Report*, which was intended to preserve a record of women's media involvement and be used as a resource for teachers. It brought out a documentary source book on women and media used as a college text and a collection of syllabi for classes on women and mass communications. In addition, it conducted seven international conferences on media and women and two international satellite teleconferences.

Yet little scholarly attempt has been made to examine ideas about communications presented by Allen and the institute. No study has been done of Allen herself and the factors responsible for her emergence as a feminist communications activist. Certainly Allen has been recognized for her efforts. In 1979 she won a Headliner award, the highest award bestowed by Women in Communications Inc.[1] The following year she received the Broadcast Preceptor Award for leadership in extending First Amendment guarantees to women from the 28th annual Broadcast Industry Conference meeting in San Francisco. In 1983 she won a "Wonder Woman Award" from the Wonder Woman Foundation for personal courage, strength of character, risk-taking and pioneering new territory. The Committee on the Status of Women of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication honored her in 1988 with its award for outstanding Contributions to Women in Communication. The following year she received a special citation from the Women's Roundtable of the American Journal-

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[1]Susan Melnick, "Criteria for Covering Women's News: Donna Allen," *The Matrix* (November 1979), 11.

ism Historians Association for her efforts to preserve women's history in the media.[2] She was a delegate to the United Nations Conference on Women and Media in 1980 and was appointed by the State Department as a delegate to the National Women's Conference in Houston in 1977. Recognition, however, is not necessarily equated with an understanding of Allen's motivations and philosophy.

This paper traces Allen's career and the development of her ideas regarding women and the media. It is based primarily on Allen's own unpublished papers supplemented by an interview. Although the author realizes the difficulty in overcoming bias when dealing with personal materials, it seemed important to allow Allen to speak for herself in line with her own views on communication. This paper represents the first attempt either to gather biographical data about Allen or to treat her as a significant figure in communications history. Her accomplishments and honors, however, testify to the fact that her philosophy on women and the media has reached a sizable audience and merits examination. The paper is divided into three parts: (A) Allen's early life; (B) Development of Allen's communications philosophy; and (C) Examination of the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press and its publications, including *Media Report to Women*. A final section will assess Allen's contribution to First Amendment issues.

Allen's Early Life

Allen did not become interested in communications issues until relatively late in life. Her involvement grew out of personal experiences related to her career as a labor economist and peace movement activist. These pursuits stemmed in turn from a family background of hard work, belief in education and commitment to the democratic idea of equality. Born in Petoskey, Michigan, on Aug. 19, 1920, she was one of three children of Caspar and Louise (Densmore) Rehkopf.[3] Her paternal grandfather, Jacob Rehkopf, the son of German immigrants, had married Martha Henderson, who was a cousin of Eli Whitney. Her mother, Louise Densmore, the daughter of a boat captain on the Great Lakes, had been the first woman in her family to go to college and was a graduate of the University of Michigan. Her father's family ran a summer hotel, and Allen's father met her mother when she worked there to pay for her college expenses.

According to Allen, when her parents were married, her mother made her father promise that if he "ever came to a point where he said, 'I wouldn't be doing this work if I had a college education,' that he would drop whatever he was doing and no matter how much money they had or didn't have and the size of their family, he would go to college."[4] This happened in 1925 when Rehkopf, frustrated by jobs in wood pulp mills, took his family of five to East Lansing, Michigan, where he enrolled in Michigan State University. In 1929 he was graduated magna cum laude in engineering and obtained a job as a metallurgist in the Chicago

[2]Donna Allen's activities and awards are listed in her resumé available from the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 3306 Ross Pl. NW, Washington, DC 20008, hereafter referred to as WIFP.

[3]Biographical sketch of Donna Allen, *Who's Who of American Women*. 16th ed., 1989-90, 12.

[4]Personal interview with Donna Allen by the author, Washington, D.C., Jan. 26, 1991.

area. Unfortunately the move to Illinois came just as the Depression struck. To avoid being laid off by his employer, Rehkopf took a job as a night watchman — the only position available. To pay off loans for his college education, the entire family worked, scrimped and saved. Allen and her two brothers sold magazines door-to-door.

"All through this time there was always a feeling that everybody was equal," Allen recalled in 1991. "Men and women were equal. We didn't talk about it; we just took it for granted." Both parents expected her to achieve, just like her brothers. "My father wanted me to be a foreign correspondent and my mother wanted me to be a lawyer. Nobody ever thought I wouldn't be one of those things. So that's why I say that basically my first political lesson was that everybody was equal. And that has stuck with me and been really the basis of all the things I have done."[5]

As a child Allen became interested in journalism. When she was nine, she won a $5 prize for the best book review of *The Wizard of Oz* submitted to the *Chicago Daily News* by an elementary school pupil. She attended Morton High School near Cicero, Illinois, where she wrote for the high school newspaper. Immediately after graduation in 1938, she won a scholarship to a summer journalism institute at Northwestern University. One of the instructors there steered her away from journalism school and urged her to develop a specialty in a field such as labor or economics.

Uncertain what to study, Allen majored in history at Morton Junior College because her father told her "all the lessons [of the past] are there but nobody knows how to read history."[6] She worked briefly as editor of a community newspaper before enrolling at Duke University to complete her bachelor's degree in history with a minor in economics. She was graduated in 1943 four months after her marriage to a high school classmate, Russell Allen.

When her husband was drafted into the Army and sent to the West Coast, Allen joined him there and helped organize farm workers into labor unions. She was employed in military intelligence and wrote pamphlets for the American Federation of Labor in Washington while he was overseas. On his return, she told him that she wanted to get a master's degree in economics from the University of Chicago and he decided to do the same thing.

Although the couple had four children, Dana, Indra, Martha and Mark, she was not deterred from finishing her degree which she received in 1953. She remembers that she and her husband staggered their class schedules so they could take turns looking after the children and that they rushed through examinations because they had to get back to their family.[7] While a graduate student, Allen worked as an assistant to Paul H. Douglas, then a professor and later a U.S. Senator, in updating his classic text, *Theory of Wages*. She also wrote briefs for Presidential Emergency Boards appointed by President Truman to resolve railroad labor disputes.

Initially drawn to economics because she had grown up in the Depression and been told that social inequalities stemmed from economic causes, Allen eventually decided that this "was a lot of hooey." She became convinced that "the peo-

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[5]Ibid.
[6]Ibid.
[7]Ibid.

ple who had the money were the ones who were telling everybody what to believe and that we were outnumbered because we couldn't be heard and we didn't have the means to be heard."[8] In her view political factors eclipsed economic ones as the basis of injustice but were obscured by public presentation of the issues.

Her dissatisfaction with the mass media increased after her family moved to the Schenectady, New York, area where her husband was research director for the Papermakers International Union. From 1953 to 1955 Allen taught classes in grievance procedures and labor economics and history for the School of Industrial and Labor Relations of Cornell University. She became involved in the League of Women Voters because the organization was studying the Truman administration's loyalty program for government employees that stemmed from widespread fears of Communists in government. Allen objected strongly to loyalty oaths and to their acceptance by most of the media. She also defended Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, a New York couple electrocuted in 1953 following conviction for espionage in the furnishing of atomic bomb secrets to the Soviet Union.[9] "I didn't believe they were guilty. I saw how the newspapers built this whole thing up against them, and I just could not believe that," Allen recalled. "I could hardly find people to talk to me about it. They'd look at me and sort of say, 'You some kind of a Communist or something?' You couldn't even talk about things."[10]

In 1957 the Allens came to Washington, D.C., when Russell Allen took a job as research director for the American Federation of Labor/Congress of Industrial Organization. They settled in a three-story, six-bedroom turn-of-the-century house in Washington's elite Cleveland Park area. Donna Allen, who was divorced in 1970, has lived there ever since, making the house both a home and office. During the 1960s the house was used as a way station for civil rights organizers moving from the South to the North. From the 1970s on Allen has used it for the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press.

Development of Allen's Communications Philosophy

The peace movement occupied much of Allen's attention during the Kennedy-Johnson years. In 1960 she was a legislative assistant to Rep. William H. Meyer, a Vermont Democrat who opposed the spread of nuclear weapons. She worked with the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy and became one of the founders of the Women's Strike for Peace, an anti-nuclear weapon organization. Along with Dagmar Wilson, another founder, and Russell Nixon of New York, manager of the *National Guardian* newspaper, Allen made headlines in 1964. The three were called to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee after attempting to get a visa for a Japanese peace leader to come to the United States. When they refused to answer questions at a closed committee meeting, they were cited for contempt of Congress.

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[8]Ibid.

[9]For a discussion of the loyalty program, see Joseph C. Goulden, *The Best Years, 1945-1950* (New York: Athenaeum, 1976), 308-14. The Rosenberg case is set in the context of anti-Red hysteria in Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager, *A Pocket History of the United States* 7th ed. (New York: Washington Square Press, 1981), 503-06.

[10]Allen interview, Jan. 26, 1991.

Allen's personal experience as the subject of news stories about the contempt charge reinforced her conviction of mass media bias in news coverage. In terms of conventional news coverage, the press played the story factually but unfairly, in her view. "A federal grand jury today indicted two Washington women and a man for refusing to answer questions at a closed session of a House subcommittee on Un-American Activities," the front page account in the *Washington Star* began under a headline, "House Accuses Pair From D.C. of Contempt."[11]

"They [the newspapers] didn't pick up my message, my ideas, no," she said. "They just picked up the people who were calling me names, like the Un-American Activities Committee. They wouldn't put me in the headlines to tell something I believe affirmatively about. But if I'm under attack, they'll put me in the headlines."[12]

Tried in U.S. District Court in Washington, Allen, Wilson and Nixon were convicted of contempt of Congress on April 8, 1965.[13] They were given suspended sentences of four to 12 months in jail.[14] The contempt citation came just before Allen delivered a paper on the economics of disarmament at an international conference in Vienna and led to her appearance before 5000 peace demonstrators in Paris who hailed her as a heroine.[15] The conviction was overthrown on a technicality by the U.S. Court of Appeals in 1966.[16]

As a prominent peace activist, Allen spoke across the nation from 1959 to 1969. Chair of the legislative committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, she emphasized the economic benefit to be gained from disarmament. In a paper delivered at a symposium at the University of Michigan and subsequently published by the league, Allen took issue with "the mistaken assumption that the economy needs armaments or it will collapse," contending instead that it "needs disarmament or it will collapse."[17]

From 1965 to 1974 she served as Washington lobbyist for the Committee to Abolish the House Un-American Activities Committee (which changed its name to the Committee Against Repressive Legislation after the Un-American Activities Committee was terminated in 1969). She spoke out against a climate of anti-Communist sentiment linked to the Vietnam war. On a Washington panel in 1965, she said, "It is not for us to decide whether someone else's truth should or should not be spoken; it must be spoken."[18] In her opinion the mass media silenced voices that objected to the war.

Allen ran as a "peace" delegate from the District of Columbia to the Republican national convention in 1968. Washington newspapers trivialized her candidacy and featured it on their women's pages. "She Wants to Fly with GOP

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[11]Roberta Hornig, "House Accuses Pair from D.C. of Contempt," *Washington Star*, Dec. 30, 1964. See also background on Women's Strike for Peace in Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 263-64, 268.

[12]Allen interview, Jan. 26, 1991.

[13]"2 D.C. Women, N.Y. Man Guilty of Contempt," [Washington] *Evening Star*, April 9, 1965.

[14]"3 Fined for Contempt in Red Probe Silence," (Washington] *Evening Star*, June 4, 1965.

[15]Allen interview, Jan. 26, 1991.

[16]"'Peace Strike' Convictions for House Contempt Upset," *Washington Star*, Aug. 2, 1966.

[17]Donna Allen, "The Economic Necessity to Disarm, *Four Lights*, U. S. Section, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (February 1964) 1, 4.

[18]Text of remarks by Donna Allen at the Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C., Nov. 27, 1965, Allen papers, WIFP.

Doves," read the headline in *The Washington Post.*[19] "An attractive District mother attached her political cap to the wings of a dove yesterday and threw it into hawk country, the D.C. Republican party," the *Washington Daily News* wrote.[20] Only the *Washington Star* reported straightforwardly, "Peace Candidate Enters District GOP Primary."[21] Allen did not win. Nor did she accomplish her aim of focusing public attention on peace issues.

"In the year '68, I decided that this was hopeless, that everything we did was undone by the media, as fast or faster than we could do it," she said. "By this time, most of the speeches I was making were about the media."[22] In Pittsburgh in 1969 she contended "the mass media monopoly" prevented the free flow of ideas, arguing "instead of a free press, we have a controlled press in this country, a press controlled by a small number of Americans representing a single economic class: the wealthy."[23] She was interviewed on a local television station. A male newscaster listened and then told the audience, as Allen remembered it, "You heard her, folks. Bar your doors. The crazies are here tonight."[24]

As an economist, Allen found it hard to get her views taken seriously even though her book on fringe benefits for employees, the outgrowth of her master's thesis at the University of Chicago, had been published by Cornell University Press in 1964 and was reissued in a revised edition in 1969. The thesis is that the fringe benefit movement developed as a management tool rather than a demand by labor.[25] Considered a definitive work on the subject, Allen's book gave her the credentials to analyze the economic basis of the mass media. She called attention to newspaper monopolies in more than 90 percent of U.S. cities and control of broadcasting by the three networks. "The best way to correct the errors of government policy — at least for those who are not revolutionists is to work at the task of restoring a free press to *all* Americans as the First Amendment intended," Allen wrote in 1968.[26]

Yet she found relatively few willing to listen to the views of a woman and blamed media sex-role stereotyping after World War II for this situation. "When I went to graduate school in the late forties, men and women as far as I could see were equal," she recalled. But in the fifties she observed "a change in attitude" when male economists refused to include her in their conversations except to say, "How are the kids?" "I came to realize that I was being treated by them, who should have known better, the way women are portrayed on television. All I could think of was that this is the way the man's media was portraying women and so they shifted their way of thinking," she explained.[27]

Allen's disillusionment with the media included the radical, as well as the tra-

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[19]Robert Asher, "She Wants to Fly with GOP Doves," *Washington Post,* Dec. 28, 1967.

[20]"GOP Mom Puts Cap on Dove's Wing," *Washington Daily News*, Dec. 28, 1967.

[21]"Peace Candidate Enters District GOP Primary," (Washington] *Evening Star*, Dec. 28, 1967.

[22]Allen interview, Jan. 26, 1991.

[23]Text of speech by Donna Allen titled "The Mass Media Monopoly," given May 24, 1969, at Spring Action March and Rally for Peace and Justice, Pittsburgh, Pa., Allen papers, WIFP.

[24]Comments by Donna Allen to author, Jan. 24, 1991, Washington, D.C.

[25]Donna Allen, *Fringe Benefits: Wages or Social Obligation?* Rev. ed. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1964), xiii-xvi.

[26]Donna Allen, "Up Against the Media," THE LIBERATED VOICE, underground newspaper, Syracuse, N.Y., July 10, 1968.

[27]Allen interview, Jan. 26, 1991.

ditional, press. She offered to write a woman's column for the *Guardian* (successor to the *National Guardian*), but the editor rejected her idea at the same time he asked her if she could suggest a "reliable economics writer," disregarding Allen's own expertise in economics.[28] The *Guardian*, however, published an opinion article by Allen in which she called the publication "a man's newspaper in coverage," even though "it has a nice 50-50 balance of men and women in its staff."[29] She stressed, "When newspapers regularly ignore the contributions of women as speakers or participants in conferences, the impression is created that women are inferior in the competition with men's ideas."[30]

Not surprisingly, Allen was one of the first Washington members of the women's liberation movement that developed in the 1960s as an outgrowth of civil rights and other social protests.[31] She drove to Atlantic City to support the movement's first public action — a demonstration at the 1968 Miss America contest during which protesters tossed bras, girdles, false eyelashes and other trappings of sexual oppression into a "freedom trash can" and crowned a live sheep Miss America.[32] Fully behind the demonstrators, Allen nevertheless believed that the protest, staged to got media attention, was "not a very dignified way to have to communicate in a democracy."[33] Dignity always has been important to Allen, a soft-spoken, modest woman who wears conservative attire and presents a ladylike appearance.

At the time of the Atlantic City demonstration, Allen had started a Ph.D. program in history at Howard University where she received her doctorate in 1971, after writing a dissertation on national health insurance. She argued that the mass media had failed to give the public enough information to make an adequate decision but instead had portrayed national health as a socialistic scheme against free enterprise. Allen since has expanded her dissertation into a book-length manuscript.[34]

Allen's first organized effort to push for media change was establishment of a group called Americans for Equal Access to the Media. Among the members were Pat Saltonstall, granddaughter of a Massachusetts Senator, and others who had been involved in the peace movement. Allen dropped out of the organization, however, for two reasons: (1) she failed to find men interested in joining, and (2) she decided that women should not simply try to get access to media owned by men but should instead develop their own. "Why should we go in and say we want some of your property? That's not right. Under the First Amendment they own it and they have a right to put out anything they want," she said.[35] Instead of seeking access, Allen had another idea — to form a communications network among women.

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[28]Jack A. Smith to Donna Allen, 7 May, 1968, Allen papers, WIPP.

[29]Donna Allen, "OPINION: Women and the Movement," *Guardian*, June 22-29, 1968, 11.

[30]Ibid.

[31]See Evans, *Born for Liberty*, 273-285.

[32]See Joanna Foley Martin, "Confessions of a Non Bra-Burner," *Chicago Journalism Review* 4 (July 1971): 11.

[33]Allen interview, Jan. 26, 1991.

[34]Donna Allen, unpublished manuscript, "Media and Democracy: Why We Don't Have National Health Insurance," Chapter 2, Allen papers, WIFP.

[35]Allen interview, Jan. 26, 1991.

The Women's Institute

In 1972 Allen and three other women, Margot Burman, Sara Altherr and Karen Lunquist, started the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press. Burman, a free-lance writer, Altherr, at the time an employee of the *Washington Post*, and Lunquist, subsequently publisher of a women's self-defense newsletter, initially helped Allen, who became president of the non-profit tax-exempt organization.[36] Over the years, hampered by lack of funds, Allen conducted the institute mainly by herself with aid from college interns. There has been no paid staff. Dana Densmore, one of Allen's daughters, a professor at St. John's College in New Mexico, has acted as vice-president. Allen's chief assistant has been another daughter, Martha L. Allen, who received her Ph.D. in history at Howard University in 1988. A third daughter, Indra Allen, has provided drawings for some publications. Both Donna and Martha Allen set type for publications on a large machine installed in the former living room of the Ross Place house. Rising each day at 4 a.m., Donna Allen accustomed herself to sleep only six hours a night, devoting her energies to the institute.

The institute's aim is to conduct research and educational activities and to publish theoretical and practical works on the communication of information. There are no dues. Some 700 women, including leading feminists like Gloria Steinem and Adrienne Rich, women working in media jobs and college professors, have become associates by informing Allen they agree with the following statement:

> For the right to 'freedom of the press' to be meaningful, there must be a realistic means of exercising it — for all of us, not just for the multi-millionaires among us. In a century as creative as ours, we are sure a better way to provide a means of communication to all who need it can be devised. We do not like to be in a position of having to 'beg' or 'demand' access to media that belong to others, happy to be mentioned even if inaccurately. There is a very large number of women who are increasingly becoming dissatisfied with the inadequacies of the present structures. We are seeking improvement, both through provision of our own media and in the existing media through our inclusion at all levels equally — in employment, news coverage and a more accurate portrayal of our abilities and our options politically, economically, and socially. We wish to indicate by our association with the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press and its work on this problem that we, too, desire more attention to the issue.
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> We have differences in views among us and we would propose different solutions and work at many different proposals, some of us in our existing media and some of us outside it, at different levels and in different places. But we are united in our desire to encourage meaningful change that expands the exercise of our right to communicate in the media we find most suitable to our message — no less than the right exercised by some who presently are able to communicate their information to millions of others.

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[36]Ibid.

> We know that changes in the structure of mass communication are going to come; too many people are now being left out. The question is on what principles is that restructuring going to be made? We want to have something to say about how the communications systems of the future are going to develop.
>
> We want to work together to register our unity, to aid each other in obtaining the help and funding we need for our projects and to encourage the greater total funding for constructive changes in the world's communications systems. For women to continue to make progress, a communications system is essential that will enable us both to exchange our information and to reach the general public.[37]

Allen and Densmore drew up a call for research published repeatedly in the institute's periodicals. It consisted of four sections and suggested ideas for research under each of them: (1) Women's progress correlated with having a means of communication; (2) Mass media as a means of governing rather than a means of communication; (3) Movement to democratize mass media (based on the protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s); (4) Restructuring the nation's communications system.[38] It also included "seven realities for a new philosophy of communication": (1) "People make their judgments on the basis of the information they have at a given time; (2) Each person is the best judge of her or his own best interest; (3) Media owners give us the information they think it is important for us to know; (4) Media do not mirror society (only their owners); (5) For the public to obtain the information of the majority, people must be able to speak for themselves; (6) Power is based on the number of people you can reach with your information; (7) Equalizing power among us would require that we all have equal means of reaching the public to communicate our information when we wish, in the way most suitable to our message."[39]

Allen put these principles into practice in her editorship of *Media Report to Women*, which started out as a free-distribution mimeographed newsletter in 1972. It became a printed monthly publication two years later. Issues contained eight to 24 pages — 12 was the usual number — and sold for $1.50 per single copy, while annual subscriptions were $15 for individual women and $20 for institutions. The publication reached about 2000 subscribers, some 500 of which were libraries.[40] Allen sold the *Media Report* in 1987 to another publisher, Communication Research Associates, which has continued it.

As editor Allen published excerpts from various sources pertaining to "what women are thinking and doing to change the communications media." as the subhead for each issue of *Media Report* put it. She quoted verbatim from books, articles, press releases and announcements, telling readers to "take a look at every

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[37]"Associates Statement," in Martha Leslie Allen, ed., *1982 Index Directory of Women's Media* (Wash., DC: Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 1982), 40.

[38]Donna Allen and Dana Densmore, "A Radical Feminist Analysis of Mass Media," in Martha L. Allen, ed., *1989 Directory of Women's Media* (Wash., DC: Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 1989), 95-98.

[39]Ibid., 95.

[40]Allen interview, Jan. 26, 1991.

story in every issue to see how much of the item is in quotes; it makes the news information come direct from the source."[41] She also ran paid advertising for journalism faculty positions.

News items, carried without editorial comment, ended with a note telling readers where to find additional information. Because some items contained only one or two paragraphs, Allen was able to cover a wide variety of subjects. Headlines were in small type and typically of the two-line, one-column variety, although narrow one-line heads sometimes extended across an entire page. There was little attempt at graphics — simply item after item of information. In the 1980s Allen added a personal column.

The range of topics appears in subject entries in the annotated index/directories which the institute published annually from 1976 until 1989. The index portion of these publications listed hundreds of women's media groups including feminist presses and publishers, news services, broadcasters, and bookstores, plus individual media women. For example, the five-year index to *Media Report to Women* for 1972-1976 contained some 120 headings. Among them: Access to public; affirmative action plans; black women; books on women and communications; conferences; courses on women and media; Federal Communications Commission; feminist journalism; health issues; license renewals; magazines; news coverage; newspapers and newsletters; pornography; portrayal of women; programming; sex; sports; television; women's history; women's movement.[42] In subsequent directories the number of categories increased, making the publication a record of general feminist activities. *Media Report* printed material that could be found elsewhere, such as the full text of a class-action sex-discrimination suit against the *New York Times*. The suit was barely mentioned in the *Times* itself.[43]

In keeping with Allen's interest in providing material for student use, the institute in 1977 published a documentary text for use in women-and-the-media classes.[44] It sold about 7000 copies, a sizable number for a book of this type.[45] The institute also sponsored a contest for creating the best syllabi for women-and-media courses and collected entries into a syllabus sourcebook.[46]

Through the institute Allen organized a series of seven conferences in Washington on planning communications networks, which brought together feminist journalists.[47] She also set up two satellite teleconferences for women. One, "Dateline Copenhagen: Woman's View," took place in 1980 between delegates

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[41]Donna Allen, "Editor's Comments on This Issue of 'Media Report to Women,'" *Media Report to Women*, Dec. 1, 1981, 2.

[42]*Media Report to Women Annotated Index of Media Activities and Research: 1972-1976* (Wash., DC: Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 1977), 2-31.

[43]See *Media Report to Women*, Dec. 31, 1978, a special issue entirely devoted to the papers filed in suit.

[44]The text, *Women in Media: A Documentary Sourcebook*, was prepared by Maurine Beasley and Sheila Gibbons of the University of Maryland College of Journalism. The institute published it after they were unable to find a commercial publisher interested in material on women and the media.

[45]Lists of buyers of the book are maintained at the WIFP.

[46]See Dana Densmore, ed., *Syllabus Sourcebook on Media and Women* (Wash., DC: Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 1980. It contains 68 course outlines with reading lists.

[47]See *Report on First Annual Conference on Planning a National and International Communications System for Women* (Wash., DC: Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 1979), 3-10.

to the United Nations Mid-Decade World Conference of Women in Denmark and women in six U.S. cities. The other, "Dateline Nairobi: Women's View," in 1985 brought together delegates to the United Nations Decade for Women World Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, and women in three U.S. cities.[48] "Most of all, we had to find new ways to reach the public," Allen explained.[49] The institute pushed for a women's access channel on cable television in the District of Columbia and almost succeeded in obtaining one, "but then we had it taken away from us by the politics here," Allen said.[50]

Since selling the *Media Report*, Allen has concentrated on writing and speaking. In 1989 she co-edited a theoretical book on communication called *Communications at the Crossroads: The Gender Gap Connection*.[51] In a speech to the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication meeting in Los Angeles in 1990, she summed up the philosophy behind the institute. She said, "It is not enough that those who own the national media attempt to report the information from the diverse elements of society, try to speak for them. By definition, democracy assumes that all citizens vote, speak and participate politically as equals."[52] She urged journalism educators to pay more attention to noncommercial media, noting that the institute's last directory had listed more than 700 women's periodicals.[53] "It is not easy to put out periodicals or broadcasts without revenue, regardless of how much the public may lack or need the information they contain, or to teach ways to correct stereotypes still going out to millions of people daily or to change news definitions that exclude minorities' and women's information," Allen continued.[54] As one who had devoted years of herself to that endeavor, she spoke from personal experience.

Allen's Contribution to First Amendment Issues

Allen's analysis of the media as a giant, male-dominated monopoly is not original, but other parts of her theory are. Her view that women lack economic equality with men, so consequently have far fewer opportunities to voice their experiences through the mass media, has been expressed by others. Allen believes that the mass media have deprived individuals of the means to communicate on an equal basis, thus making the First Amendment far less meaningful to marginal groups than to the white male power structure. This position is also taken by other feminist scholars.[55]

The strength of Allen's ideas lies not only in her analysis and theory but in

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[48]Allen resumé, 1.

[49]Allen interview, Jan. 26, 1991.

[50]Ibid.

[51]See Ramona R. Rush and Donna Allen, eds., *Communications at the Crossroads: The Gender Gap Connection* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1989). This volume deals with the exclusion of women from the communications process and addresses ways to raise women's issues globally and locally.

[52]Donna Allen, "Women, Minorities & Freedom of the Press," *Newspaper Research Journal* 11 (Summer 1990): 13.

[53]Martha L. Allen, ed., *1989 Directory of Women's Media* (Wash., DC: Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 1989), 3-34.

[54]Allen, "Women, Minorities & Freedom of the Press," 17.

[55]Carolyn Stewart Dyer, "Feminist Perspectives on Media Law," in Pamela J. Creedon, ed., *Women in Mass Communication: Challenging Gender Values* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1989), 58-82.

her personal ability to actualize them. By her own example she has shown that a single person — a woman — can focus attention on women's self-expression. She has emphasized action as a way for women to develop a more powerful role in communication, picturing a two-tiered communications system. The first tier consists of feminist media and the second of women working their way into the commercial mass media. Allen is sure that ideas expressed in women's media eventually work their way into the general media through the efforts of women reporters and editors. As an example, she points to the subject of battered women raised in the feminist press years before it appeared in daily news columns.[56]

Although it rarely used adjectives, *Media Report to Women* presented all actions by women in the media as worthy of acclaim. In it Allen attempted a type of journalism in which the reporter is removed as a filter between the speaker and the reader. While critics might say this resembled free advertising, Allen took a different position. To her it was "people speaking for themselves," one of three "principles of feminist journalism," in contrast with the existing male-dominated journalism.[57] The other two: "No attacks on people," and commitment to providing "more factual information."[58] Allen sees this as necessary because she contends the media are giant businesses concerned with making money rather than providing systems for people to communicate vital information.

In providing facts, Allen prided herself on avoiding repetition associated with conventional journalistic agenda-setting, which proclaims some events and minimizes others. Unlike journalists in general, Allen avoided controversy, treating all women's activities that she covered as positive. She declined to feature disagreements among women themselves. In seeking to have individuals represented by their own words, she has tried to make print journalism more analogous to broadcast journalism in which individuals are heard and seen directly by the audience without reportorial intervention.

In her work Allen has accepted as fact a concept of women's reality vastly different from men's. She assumes that women, who constitute 52 percent of the population, will revolutionize communications in the long run. Viewing women as morally superior to men in regard to issues of peace and nurturing, Allen longs for the day when women will replace men in decision-making media positions. She is sure that women will use their power more judiciously than men for social and political improvements. To her each manifestation of women's activity in the media represents a welcome step forward, no matter how tentative or marginal.

Allen has not criticized the First Amendment, only its operation. In fact, she believes owners should be allowed to do what they want with their property (in this case the mass media). To be sure, she thinks that women have been systematically deprived of their heritage by a media that has repressed their activities.[59] To her the cure, however, is exercise of more, not less, of First Amendment

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[56]"Donna Allen: Social Control of Women Arises from Men's Superior Outreach; Antidote, Speaking for Ourselves," *Media Report to Women* (March-April 1984), 20.

[57]"Female Journalism Is Something Different," *Second Five-Year Index to Media Report to Women* (Wash., DC: Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 1982), back cover page.

[58]Ibid.

[59]"Donna Allen: We Must Not Forget To Restore Today's Women to Future History," *Media Report to Women* (March-April 1983), 24.

rights: Demonstrations, moving up from within (the media), monitoring and visiting media, building women's own media.[60]

Even when it comes to pornography, Allen, unlike some other feminists, does not necessarily favor legal action against it. Instead she urges women to join with civil liberty groups to make sure that the voices of those harmed by pornography — and Allen is sure that women are hurt by it — are heard. As she put it in *Media Report*, "'Getting ourselves together' means being in communication with each other and forming our own communication media systems, unorthodox as they often must be."[61] To Allen the danger of the First Amendment is that women's rights to use it have been eroded by an unjust patriarchal system. She wants to change that, not the idea of free expression.

This article simply tries to lay out groundwork for analysis of the work of a remarkable woman whose endeavors to develop communications networks have brought First Amendment concerns to a wide audience of women. As we recognize the bicentennial of the Bill of Rights, it seems fitting to give recognition to the work of an individual who has devoted decades to trying to broaden the effectiveness of those rights. More study is needed of Allen as a communication theorist. More attention should be given to the contents of *Media Report to Women*, a unique publication.

Allen's interest, however, lies not in getting tributes but in gaining better understanding of her philosophy. "I feel like I speak and people don't hear what I'm saying," she said.[62] A visionary, she foresees a world where technology, perhaps based on the use of personal computers, makes practical her dream of having "people speak for themselves." Although this may seem unrealistic in an era of giant media corporations, Allen is convinced that a new era of communication will come. At that point she believes the First Amendment will do what it is intended to do in a democracy — protect individuals, not primarily corporations, in the exercise of free expression. Only in this way does she think women will overcome the silence of generations of mass media oppression. Until then she calls for women to unite in efforts to influence the media.

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[60]"Donna Allen: Inequality of Media Outreach Is What Permits Some People to Dominate Others," *Media Report to Women* (September/October 1983), 20.

[61]"Donna Allen: Real First Amendment Question in Pornography Debate Is Where Are Our Free Press Rights?" *Media Report to Women* (May-June 1985), 16.

[62]Allen comments to author, Jan. 24, 1991.

Book Reviews

Historiographical Essay: Advertising

"We Must Make People Want Many Other Things"

by Peggy J. Kreshel

Books Reviewed in This Essay:

Advertising and the Transformation of American Society. By James D. Norris. Greenwood Press, 1990. 206 pp. $39.95 Cloth.

Smoke Signals: Cigarettes, Advertising and the American Way of Life. By Jane Webb Smith. University of North Carolina Press, 1990. 51 pp. $9.95 Paper.

Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market. By Susan Strasser. Pantheon Books, 1989. 340 pp. $24.95 Cloth.

New and Improved: The Story of Mass Marketing in America. By Richard S. Tedlow. Basic Books, 1990. 481 pp. $24.95 Cloth.

Advertising, both as an academic discipline, and as an occupation, has long been characterized by a lack of interest in its history. A philosophical linkage to the notion of Progress, an institutional connection to the pragmatic disciplines of psychology and business, and a limited emphasis upon history during the educational training and professionalization of those entering the field have all served to dampen the historical interest of those *within* the discipline. Further, as one scholar noted, for a long time advertising was viewed as "an affront to the cultural presuppositions of intellectuals" (D. L. LeMahieu, "The Origins of the Advertising Business," *Reviews in American History* 11 [December 1982]: 571). This attitude effectively limited the involvement of those *outside* the discipline. Not surprisingly, then, the community of scholars doing historical work in advertising remains small and the literature limited.

The purpose of this essay is to review several recent books that, in a sense, redefine our historical understanding of advertising. In order to appreciate that redefinition, however, it is necessary to outline the conversation into which these works enter.

The first significant historical account of the development of the field was Presbrey's *The History and Development of Advertising* (Doubleday, 1929). Progressive in form, and self-congratulatory in tone, it was a product of his experience as a practitioner, and the professional momentum that the advertising industry was experiencing as a result of the perceived success of World War I propaganda efforts. Despite the lack of intellectual underpinning, Presbrey's account remained virtually synonymous with "advertising history" long after the Depression and World War II had dramatically altered the institution of ad-

vertising as well as the social/cultural/political/economic landscape in which it was situated.

Other early histories of advertising included *The History of An Advertising Agency: N. W. Ayer and Son at Work* (Harvard University Press, 1939; 1949), an account authorized by that agency and based upon extensive research by Harvard Business School scholar Ralph Hower; James Playsted Wood's *The Story of Advertising* (Ronald Press, 1958), a descriptive narrative that updated Presbrey's work; and Otis Pease's *The Responsibilities of American Advertising: Private Control and Public Influence, 1920-1940* (Yale University Press, 1958). Pease's work was the first to build upon an intellectual foundation, resting on the notion of advertising as an institution of abundance, an interpretation first advanced by David Potter in *People of Plenty* (University of Chicago Press, 1955).

The next noteworthy account was nearly twenty years coming. Stuart Ewen's *Captains of Consciousness* (McGraw-Hill, 1976) developed a Marxist critique of advertising as an inherent part of industrial capitalism, a mechanism of social control. Although sharply criticized, Ewen's book currently stands as the only attempt at a critical history of the field.

A surge of scholarly interest in the 1980s resulted in four books, each of which took a different historical perspective. Stephen Fox's *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators* (William Morrow and Co., 1984), as the title implies, tells the history of advertising by focusing upon leading personalities. It is an extremely readable account and is noteworthy in that it spans the early years of modern advertising to the 1980s. The *recent* history of advertising (by this I mean post-World War II) otherwise remains largely unwritten. However, Frank W. Fox provides an excellent account of the World War II years in *Madison Avenue Goes to War, The Strange Military Career of American Advertising* (Brigham Young University Press, 1975).

Michael Schudson's *Advertising the Uneasy Persuasion: Its Dubious Impact on American Society* (Basic Books, 1984) is a sociological analysis of the "role of advertising in shaping American values and patterns of life." While it includes a chapter (Chapter 5) on the historical roots of consumer culture, that chapter lacks depth, saying virtually nothing about social and cultural context, development of modern business enterprise, expanding channels of distribution, etc. Schudson's most recognized contribution is his suggestion that advertising be viewed as capitalist realism, "capitalism's way of saying 'I love you' to itself" (p. 232).

Both Schudson's and Fox's books are directed to a general audience and are certainly well worth reading. But, aside from Schudson's conceptualization of capitalist realism, they offer little to stimulate intellectual curiosity. In contrast, Daniel Pope's *The Making of Modern Advertising* (Basic Books, 1983) and Roland Marchand's *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (University of California Press, 1985) provide carefully drawn scholarly accounts of advertising's development.

Pope concentrates on the Progressive Era, roughly 1880-1920, initially examining the preconditions that set the stage for the development of national advertising and subsequently advertising agencies. He adopts the perspective of an economic historian, noting that "it seems most important to explain the evolution of modern advertising in terms of the business needs it fulfilled" (p. 8). Advertis-

ing was undertaken when businesses began to recognize that branding and promotion would be profitable. Although Pope acknowledges that in order for "advertising to play a large part in marketing strategy consumers had to be willing to accept...self-interested persuasion as a tolerable substitute or complement to more objective product information" (p. 61), he makes no effort to make visible this cultural element. As such, the account can largely be viewed as a chapter in business history.

In contrast, Marchand's book is a thorough, finely crafted cultural history of advertising during the "interwar years," a period long neglected by advertising historians. Relying heavily on primary sources, and on advertisements themselves, Marchand argues that advertisers were "apostles of modernity," helping people to adjust to an increasingly complex urban world. "What made advertising 'modern,'" he writes, "was ironically the discovery by these 'apostles of modernity' of techniques for empathizing with the public's imperfect acceptance of modernity, with its resistance to the perfect rationalization and bureaucratization of life" (p. 13).

Marchand's beautifully illustrated book is also unique in its analysis of advertisements as cultural texts. Determining the "meaning" of ads is no easy task, given that neither the creators nor the audiences of advertisements expected them to depict reality. Instead, Marchand notes, advertisements portrayed the "ideals and aspirations of the system.... They dramatized the American Dream" (p. xviii).

In contrast to these earlier works, the books reviewed in this essay are not about advertising per se. Instead, in each, advertising is situated in the broader context of the development of mass marketing in the United States. This focus dramatically alters our perception of the field. Viewing advertising in isolation, historians and social scientists alike have had a tendency to exaggerate the institution's power. Recognizing, however, that advertising is but one of a number of technologies that operated in the transformation to a consumer society puts the institution in its proper perspective.

Additionally, the books reviewed here assume that marketing is active rather than reactive; it is more than simply a response to identifiable consumer needs and wants. As one historian writes (Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed*, Pantheon, 1989):

> Throughout the twentieth century, advertisers have claimed that they discover wants and needs rather than creating them, that markets exist somewhere "out there waiting to be tapped. Some advertising specialists have been more candid, however, at least with each other. "It is all very well to get the sales of things that people want to buy," a speaker told the Nashville ad club in 1916, "but that is too small in volume. We must make people want many other things in order to get a big increase in business" (p. 27).

Indeed, the authors of these four books repeatedly illustrate that mass marketing is the aggressive, self-conscious creation of "an expanding market not defined by supply and demand, but shaped by energetic manufacturers who understood that markets could be developed" (Strasser, p. 27).

Nowhere is this theme more clearly articulated than in Susan Strasser's *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market.* Many have writ-

ten rather abstractly about the transformation from a production to a consumption culture in the final decades of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century. Strasser, a social historian, moves briskly beyond such abstraction and examines the internal dynamic of that transformation, directing careful attention to the consumer-product interface. "The creation of modern American consumer culture involved not only introducing new products and establishing market demand for them," Strasser writes, "but also creating new domestic habits and activities, performed at home, away from stores and outside the marketing process" (p. 89).

Through fascinating, detailed, and generously illustrated "mini case studies," we are reminded that in order to sell razors, Gillette taught men accustomed to barbershops the habit of shaving at home; Colgate educated people on the importance of keeping their teeth and mouths clean in order to sell toothbrushes and paste; Eastman Kodak integrated cameras into modern lifestyles on the premise that "every man can write the outline of his own history, and that outline will be a hundredfold more interesting if it is illustrated" (quoted p. 102). So too did other new and unfamiliar products — Waterman fountain pens, Crisco shortening, Ivory Soap, Wrigley's gum, and Kellogg's cereal — find their way into the American marketplace and consumers' homes through aggressive advertising and marketing efforts.

Although the development of advertising is a prominent theme in Strasser's account, she clearly locates advertising alongside a number of factors that made mass marketing possible and profitable. In separate chapters, she directs our attention to the evolution of branded packaged goods; the "design" of markets through research and segmentation; the developing relationships between manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers in the distribution channel; the emergence of new retailers, e.g., department stores, mail-order houses, and chain stores, which altered the way people and goods came into contact; promotional efforts directed to consumers as well as the trade; and political responses to changing marketing conditions. Though her account covers broad terrain, those teaching media history courses should be forewarned that, in developing her historical account of people and goods, Strasser has suggested little about the development of media and their audiences. While this may make it somewhat more challenging to integrate the book into classroom work, it in no way detracts from the value of the book.

It is noteworthy that in the book's epilogue, Strasser aptly brings her historical account around to a contemporary heuristic. She writes:

> The significance of the historical process of market creation...lies in its location at the intersection of public and private life. The ecological consequences of unlimited market creation demand a public discourse about matters generally considered private: the things people buy and use every day, the ways they spend their time, the ways they perceive their needs. Although personal, our buying habits are not wholly private: they have public sources and public consequences (p. 280).

The strategies for dealing with these consequences, Strasser suggests, "must come, not from the sum of individual choices in the marketplace, but from a political process that addresses inherent conflicts and competing interests.... It must

challenge the fundamental 'privacy' of our buying habits, recognizing that production and consumption — the concerns of economic activity and the intimate habits of daily life — are and always have been intertwined aspects of human cultures" (p. 291).

An excellent complement to Strasser's book is Richard S. Tedlow's *New and Improved: The Story of Mass Marketing in America.* Like Strasser, Tedlow views marketing as the conscious creation of demand. He notes, "There is nothing 'natural' about mass consumption. It is a cultural and social construction. One of the keystones of the edifice is the marketing function in the modern, large American corporation" (p. 4). Unlike Strasser, however, Tedlow positions the consumer only tangentially to his narrative. Instead, his is "a story told from the point of view of the firm."

A professor at the Harvard School of Business, Tedlow brings to this work the expertise of a marketer and the thoroughness and insight of a well-trained historian. His analysis is developed within the framework of a three-phase theory of the historical development of American marketing. The initial phase is characterized by the existence of hundreds of fragmented local markets. Firms are small., and make high margins on low-volume sales. National brands are virtually unknown in the absence of the necessary transportation and communication infrastructures. Only upon the completion of these infrastructures near the end of the nineteenth century is the national market able to enter the "unification" phase, the phase of mass marketing, "the strategy of profit through volume — selling many units at low margins rather than few units at high margins — historically has been the distinctive signature of the American approach to marketing," writes Tedlow. "By making products available to the masses all over the nation — by democratizing consumption — the mass marketer did something profoundly American" (p. 16). During this second phase, firms assume new power to shape and mold that market through packaging and branding, national advertising, and the expansion of distribution channels, those developments so carefully detailed by Strasser. The final phase, market segmentation, in some ways resembles phase one; the emphasis is upon demographic and psychographic division of the market rather than on unification of the market by a dominant brand.

While some may question the value of this broad outline, it serves Tedlow well as he presents four in-depth case studies of industries making the transition from one phase to another. Through these carefully drawn, well-researched cases we enter historically into marketing confrontations between Coca Cola and Pepsi, Ford and General Motors, A&P and its competitors, and Sears and Montgomery Ward and their newer rivals. The businesses are familiar to us. The cases, written from a management perspective, are rich with data, yet infinitely readable. Each begins near the turn of the twentieth century and continues through the present.

A recurring theme is that "entrepreneurial drive and vision have been essential to creating and organizing mass markets (p. 18).... [M]ass marketing was not made by preconditions. Men made it; men of vision taking risks" (p. 348). It follows that success, or lack thereof, is in large part a function of personalities. And, in the context of Tedlow's cases, we meet some extraordinary personalities: Asa Candler, Richard Sears, Henry Ford, Alfred P. Sloan, Jr. We see these men making strategic decisions., both wise and unwise, managing and mismanaging their firms' responses to changing competitive and market conditions.

There are management lessons to be learned here, though admittedly Tedlow's effort to drive general principles based upon these historical cases is perhaps too far a reach. So too is there much to be learned about advertising history in its larger marketing context. Unfortunately, the breadth of the book's scope is likely to limit its usefulness in undergraduate media history courses, though certainly it would be valuable to those who explore advertising history in a semester or quarter-length course and to those teaching at the graduate level.

While Strasser has a tendency to champion the consumer, Tedlow's book stands as a tribute to American capitalism. Some will find it maddeningly uncritical. While Tedlow acknowledges criticism of our consumption society, now virtually an institutionalized component of the advertising literature, as being "valuable and thought provoking," even "genuinely disturbing," he simply notes, "My book does not focus on issues such as this." He continues, "There has been a price, a high price, for the explosion of consumption in the past hundred years. But it is a price which, by and large, most Americans believed to be worth paying...the corporations that have provided American consumers with the alternatives from which to choose have done something worth doing" (pp. 20-21).

In *Advertising and the Transformation of American Society, 1865-1920*, we have yet another articulation of the theme advanced by Strasser and Tedlow. James D. Norris writes, "In separating consumption from the need for a product, advertising helped to hasten both the adoption and the acceptance of mass production. In a period of less than two decades, local and even individual tastes...were homogenized for the need of selling mass-produced uniform goods" (p. 168).

Norris, a business historian, begins his relatively brief book by tracing a number of economic and social developments that converged in the years following the Civil War to set the stage for advertising to play a role in the creation of national markets for consumer goods: a breakdown of localism, a collected audience and a concentrated market, an educated citizenry with an increasing per capita income, an oligopolistic industrial structure with the potential for mass production, and a culture that valued consumption. Like Strasser, he emphasizes that national advertising, trademarks, and brand names became mechanisms through which advertisers attempted to control demand, persuading local consumers to purchase products produced by distant manufacturers. Though he discusses a number of elements in the "marketing mix," Norris focuses more directly upon advertising, particularly magazine advertising.

In chapter 2, titled "The Men, Media, and Message," Norris points out that magazine and newspaper publishing already had become lucrative businesses prior to the Civil War. However, when the war was over, the demand for low-cost magazines was fueled by general population growth and a literate public with rising per capita income. These developments — coupled with faster and lower-cost printing, reduced paper prices, and favorable postage rates — encouraged a wider and larger distribution and made these publications extremely attractive as advertising vehicles. By the turn of the century, advertising in popular magazines often exceeded 100 pages. Increased revenue from this advertising in turn supported the continued growth of the medium. Thus, "National magazine advertising made the products and the companies that advertised in the pages of widely circulated magazines household names. They convinced local consumers to purchase products manufactured by distant producers; they introduced new

companies and new products; they created wants and expanded markets; they allowed manufacturers to take advantage of economies of scale and often allowed the producer to pass some of these on to consumers at lower unit prices; and in the end they would help to induce the American people to consume" (p. 44-45).

In the chapters that follow, Norris allows "ads to speak for themselves," as he examines changes in advertising content over a wide range of products. Scholars who have grappled with the issue of advertising as a cultural institution will be uncomfortable with Norris' initial contention that "advertisements did and still do reflect or mirror the society that produces them" (p. xvi). Certainly others, including McLuhan, and more recently Fox, have taken a similar position. But those readers who have agonized with Marchand ("any naive assumptions I harbored about the character of advertising as an authentic and uncomplicated social mirror were quickly dashed..." [p. xv]) and Schudson as they sought to situate advertising and advertisements in historical and cultural context, will find Norris' seemingly unquestioning acceptance of the McLuhan position that ads are "rich and faithful" reflections of American society to be problematic; at minimum, it is worthy of serious contemplation. Indeed, a careful reading will reveal that Norris' own interpretations of advertising content clearly suggest distortion in the mirror.

In the course of Norris' discussion, we become acquainted with the strategic advertising histories" of products ranging from low-cost consumer goods such as soap and cosmetics ("While the soap manufacturers did not originate the cleanliness movement...they did embrace it with all the advertising skills they possessed."); to luxury items such as bicycles and cameras ("Advertising...created homogeneity in America's leisure and recreational habits"); tobacco ("advertising agencies must share the blame for increasing the use of a deadly substance by the American consumer"); and automobiles (" so successfully had advertising sold the car as a part of the 'good life'"). Norris concludes that advertisements shifted from product claims to a focus on consumption claims, something that Pollay has identified as a shift from informational to transformational advertising. This shift in advertising content, according to Norris, provides evidence of larger cultural change.

Norris' book is thorough, but in terms of style, it is neither lively, engaging, nor, at least at times, dispassionate. Indeed, it concludes with a rather strongly worded critique of consumption. "Cases" presented are introduced episodically, and as such, the reader is repeatedly asked to jump from one side of "the transformation" to the other. It is easy to lose sight of the book's larger theme. Additionally the book is far less generously illustrated than Strasser's book, a bit surprising given the emphasis on advertising content.

Norris' work would be strengthened by a more careful consideration of existing theoretical discussions that incorporate institutional perspectives. For example, his evaluations of advertising as being alternatively powerful and impotent are less contradictory than they are symptomatic of his failure to clearly distinguish between advertisements as creative output and advertising as an institution. That is, selling bicycles is one thing; creating "homogeneity in America's leisure and recreational habits" is something quite different.

Those who have not read widely in the field of advertising history can learn a good deal. However, because much of the material is drawn from secondary sources, many of the examples will be familiar to anyone who has read even

casually the advertising histories that have appeared in the last decade.

Yet another book that deserves mention is Jane Webb Smith's *Smoke Signals: Cigarettes, Advertising and the American Way of Life*. It is a catalog for an exhibition that originated at the Valentine Museum in Richmond, Virginia, and is rich with illustrations drawn from the collection. Smith, the curator of the exhibit, has summarized its goals, saying, "we're using cigarettes as a case study in how mass production and advertising eroded the Protestant work ethic by creating a market for something nobody needed" (quoted in the *Atlanta Journal-Atlanta Constitution*, June 3, 1990, M-1).

In the years following the Civil War, the cigarette industry was centered in Richmond, where a mostly female workforce hand-rolled cigarettes in non-mechanized factories for a small, elite clientele. As the market began to boom nationally and internationally, one manufacturer, Allen & Ginter, recognized that demand would soon outstrip supply. It sponsored a $75,000 contest for the development of a practical cigarette-producing machine. James A. Bonsack invented a continuous-process "Bonsack machine," which could produce over 70,000 cigarettes in a 10-hour day (skilled hand-rollers could produce 4-5 cigarettes per minute) to win the contest in 1881. Ironically, although they had sponsored the development of the machine, Allen & Ginter rejected it a short time later, believing that demand would never be sufficient to make use of the machine profitable. The rights were sold to James B. Duke of Durham, North Carolina, and, as Smith notes, "the revolution in the cigarette industry began" (p. 17).

Duke clearly possessed the "entrepreneurial drive and vision" that Tedlow identified as prerequisite to business success; he understood both the possibilities and the necessities of mass production. Establishing "headquarters" in New York City, he set about developing national distribution systems coordinated through hierarchical integrated management systems. Soon, he expanded operations into foreign markets. He also recognized the need to "get the message to the masses and create a market for his glut of cigarettes" (p. 19). He turned to advertising in magazines and newspapers, colorful packaging and labeling, premiums, and coupons.

Smith's story takes us beyond the early years of the cigarette industry's development to the present day, touching upon radio advertising; efforts to capture the female smoker; the war years; and the cancer scare, subsequent television ban on tobacco advertising, and the continuing debate on cigarettes and health. Here, too, we become immersed in images of popular culture that have grown up around the cigarette industry — Johnny Roventini, the bellhop who called for Philip Morris on the radio; Amelia Earhart's testimonial that "nothing else helped so much to lessen the strain of us all" on her flight across the Atlantic as Lucky Strikes; a now-infamous dromedary named Old Joe from the Barnum and Bailey Circus; and, of course, the Marlboro cowboy.

While Smith's book is focused on the Richmond cigarette industry, it draws upon a wealth of secondary sources to tell a much larger story about the "managerial and second industrial revolutions, the development of American advertising, and the transformation of American values" (p. 8). Of the four books reviewed here, because of its brevity, excellent bibliography, quick-paced writing style, and pictorial appeal, Smith's may well be the one most easily integrated into media history courses.

While these books might not prove to be useful classroom texts, all provide excellent contextual framing for a study of the development of advertising and are sure to enrich any discussion of media history. My own belief is that we can best serve students and develop their fascination with and enthusiasm for advertising history first by developing our own fascination and enthusiasm. A sure way to do this is by moving beyond (that is not to say excluding) histories of "great men" (unfortunately, the dearth of histories of "great women" in advertising continues) and "memorable campaigns," and looking historically at advertising amid its web of cultural, political, economic, critical, and social connections. From this vantage point, these books contribute substantially to the current store of historical advertising literature.

Sara Alpern, Joyce Antler, Elisabeth Israels Perry, and Ingrid Winther Scobie, eds. *The Challenge of Feminist Biography: Writing the Lives of Modern American Women*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992. 210 pp. Cloth, $44.95; paper, $14.95. Reviewed by Nancy L. Roberts, University of Minnesota

Essays by ten eminent feminist biographers of twentieth century American women illuminate how "changing the gender of the subject [has] changed the nature and practice of the biographical craft."

Journalism historians will find gold in every essay in this provocative and well-written anthology. Candidly discussing their challenges and difficulties as feminist biographers, the authors deal with a variety of issues. For instance, in writing her biography of Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Joyce Antler found that adult children sometimes applied a "double standard" in the way they judged their mothers and their fathers, reflecting society's greater expectations of mothers at that time. "How reliable can adult children be," she asks, "as reporters of their own childhoods and critics of their own necessarily ambivalent relationships with parents?"

Dee Garrison tackles "the old question that most historians encounter in the first year of graduate training: Is history (in this case, biography) art or science?" Both, she asserts. "Biography demands the skills of both the literary artist and the scientific researcher." While biographers should aim to write with literary panache, she notes that "feminist scholars, especially, favor social and historical explanations over psychological ones. If one psychological theme emerges from feminist biographers' work, it is a focus on the natural growth of personality, shaped by the changing passages of life as much as by dominant traits and motivations.

In writing the biography of the advocacy journalist Mary Heaton Vorse, Garrison faced the problem that most of the material about Vorse was written by men; few papers or published memoirs by women existed. Of course Garrison interviewed the women friends and neighbors of Vorse's she could find. "Still," she writes, "I will never know how much the paucity of extensive female input may have misshaped my story of Vorse's life. The scarcity of recorded female vision distorts almost all historical findings."

Sara Alpern, author of a biography of Freda Kirchwey, acknowledges the "temptation for a sympathetic biographer...to make the story come out right." But the scholar's goal is "to tell the truth, no matter how damaging." Following this principle has led her to "grey areas" of ethical concern where she realized

how publication of her work might affect the living. Alpern's discussion of how she has tried to resolve these matters is interesting and helpful.

The other contributors are Kathryn Kish Sklar, Alice Wexler, Susan Ware, Elisabeth Israels Perry, Lois Rudnick, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, and Ingrid Winther Scobie. The idea for the book grew from a panel in which the editors participated at the First Southern Conference on Women's History in Spartanburg, S.C., in June 1988. Realizing the need for a forum on the relationship between biography and history, particularly women's history, they recruited the rest of the contributors.

The Challenge of Feminist Biography will easily draw graduate and undergraduate students into thoughtful discussion. It will enrich seminars in historiography. The issues explored are often fascinating, and presented so lucidly that the book possesses considerably more popular appeal than the usual university press publication. Anyone interested in the art and science of biography will want to read this.

Richard Bourne. *Lords of the Fleet Street. The Harmsworth Dynasty*. Unwin Hyman. 1990. ix, 258 pp. 16.95 Cloth. Reviewed by J. O. Baylen (Emeritus), Eastbourne, England

Other than Paul Ferris' *The House of Northcliffe* (1971), there is no adequate history of the Harmsworth family dynasty that, after a century, still controls one of the major newspaper conglomerations in Britain. Almost all studies of the family are peripheral to biographies of the founder of the Harmsworth empire, Alfred C.W. Harmsworth, 1st Viscount Northcliffe. "My object," asserts the author of this work, "has been to give a fair and rounded picture of a unique newspaper dynasty which has lasted through three generations, where personal and family history is significantly entwined with press, politics, business and the social evolution of modern Britain..." (viii) To achieve this objective, Richard Bourne has constructed the study as four biographies: (1) Alfred Harmsworth (1865-1922), 1st Viscount Northcliffe; (2) Alfred's brother, Harold Harmsworth (1868-1940), 1st Viscount Rothermere; (3) Harold's son, Esmond Cecil (1898-1978), 2nd Viscount Rothermere; and (4) Esmond's son, Vere Harold Esmond (b. 1922), 3rd Viscount Rothermere. And, of course, throughout the narrative the emphasis is on how "The continuity of the Rothermere press has been based o family continuity..." (239).

Alfred Harmsworth was the eldest son of a large family sired by a "boozy, failed barrister" and dominated by a strong-minded mother until her death in 1925. In 1881, at the age of 16, Alfred left school determined to become a journalist. He free-lanced for four years and briefly edited a youth magazine until 1888, when he hit the "jackpot" by launching a new weekly paper, *Answers to Correspondents*. His great success with *Answers* and the "winning streak" that followed rescued the Harmsworth family from penury by providing "a miraculous source of employment for his brothers and a hope of income for his sisters..." (15). And, even more so when Alfred founded the Pandora Publications company in 1890 and quickly launched two humor periodicals that cornered a large part of the youth market. Fortunately, he was assisted by his younger brother Harold, a shrewd and ruthless businessman who helped make the magazines a very profitable enterprise.

Then, in 1894, Alfred became a newspaper proprietor when he purchased the faltering Tory *Evening News.* With the brilliant editor Kennedy Jones, Alfred revived the paper by featuring crime stories, daily short stories, sports, and women's concerns. He always had "a good nose for what interested women" and, to capture the female market, established *Home Chat* (edited by his brother Leicester) which quickly outstripped its rivals. But Alfred's great ambition was to establish a new kind of morning paper and he sought to achieve this objective by creating the half-penny *Daily Mail* in 1895. The *Mail* was an outstanding success because of its "readability" and despite it being disparaged by the "Establishment" as a paper produced "by office-boys for office-boys." It wasn't long before his success as a newspaper proprietor and his spirited defense of the government during the Boer War (1899-1902) earned Alfred Harmsworth a knighthood and then a baronetcy as Lord Northcliffe. But Northcliffe's rapid rise from "a hand-to-mouth freelance" to successful publisher by the age of thirty inflated his high opinion of himself and inspired him to acquire the venerable *Observer* in 1905 and the staid *Times* in 1908. Northcliffe worked hard to "reform" and revitalize *The Times,* but never quite succeeded in changing the paper and it remained a journal "driven by editorial policy...rather than by the drama of daily news..." (71) as its hectoring owner wanted it to become.

As Northcliffe's power increased, he became ever more arrogant and megalomanic, relentlessly pressing his Germanophobia, demands for greater armaments, and empire concerns on the government and making life miserable for Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and then David Lloyd George (who Northcliffe helped oust Asquith). Until his death in 1922, Northcliffe was also a severe trial to his vast staff and family (although not to his wife, two mistresses, and mother). Nevertheless, his influence on the development of the popular press was positive as well as negative. In the *Daily Mail*, Northcliffe certainly demonstrated how a paper could appeal to women, make "the mundane features of daily life" interesting, and emphasize "the immediacy of the news..." (69-70).

Since Northcliffe left no legitimate children, his empire passed to Harold, now 1st Viscount Rothermere. It was what Northcliffe desired because his thinking was dynastic and he was very much the financial provider for his entire family. On succeeding Alfred, Rothermere's first task was to consolidate the family business against sharp competition from other press groups and he quite succeeded in his efforts by selling the troublesome *Times* and the Amalgamated Press and by diversifying the family's holdings by investing in the timber and pulp business in Canada, purchasing the Bowater paper company in Britain and property in Budapest, buying into British Movietone News, the London General Cab Company, and West End theaters. Like Northcliffe, Rothermere lived in a grand style and with many pretty women. He also wasted much money trying to dominate the Tory party and blundered by disposing of the *Daily Mirror*, by involving his papers in vendettas against socialism and Stanley Baldwin, by his enthusiasms for Lloyd George, Empire Free Trade, Sir Oswald Mosley's fascist Blackshirt movement, massive rearmament, appeasement of the dictators, and by his efforts to prevent the abdication of King Edward VIII. In all of these endeavors, notes Bourne, "Rothermere, with his big signed articles and obvious influence over his newspapers, actually contributed to the decay of the idea that a press proprietor could be a major political force in Britain..." (128). Yet, in spite of his egotism and authoritarian demeanor, people close to Rothermere found

him kind, considerate, charming, and a generous friend. He was genuinely mourned by many associates when he died abroad in November 1940, leaving the substantial family empire to his sole surviving son, Esmond.

The death of Esmond's two elder brothers in World War I prevented him from realizing his own career inclinations. Since Northcliffe had decreed that he should serve in Parliament, Esmond was secured a seat in the Commons in 1919 and served for over a decade as a faithful backbench Tory M.P. while participating as a director in the family's Associated Newspapers company. Tall, handsome, and personable, Esmond echoed the prejudices of his uncle and father against excessive government spending on social services and Rothermere's opposition to according the vote to all women. He left Parliament in 1929 for a full time career in the family business at the time his first marriage ended in divorce. His life was now that of an urbane aristocrat, very loyal to a few intimates, but incapable of easy friendships. But it was difficult for Esmond to work in the shadow of his father, who very reluctantly relinquished authority in the business. By this time, the *Daily Mail* and its sister dailies were encountering intense competition from Lord Beaverbrook's *Express* group and Esmond know that a drastic overhaul of his group's management was necessary. When he personally assumed the Chairmanship of the *Daily Mail* and the General Trust in 1937, the staff found him more liberal and less confident than his father. However, it was not until the outbreak of war in 1939 that Esmond really came into his own — only to face another crisis when, on the death of his father in 1940, he inherited an estate depleted by Lord Rothermere's profligate spending on his family and mistresses.

During the war, Esmond married again, this time to Lady Ann O'Neill, a young ambitious widow who was the lover of Ian Fleming and continued her liaison with him even in Esmond's homes. After seven years of trauma for Esmond, the union was dissolved in 1951 and thereafter none of Fleming's best-selling James Bond novels were ever reviewed in the Rothermere newspapers. Following the disaster of his second marriage, Esmond became less concerned with the editorial side of the *Mail* group but kept the papers reasonably faithful to Churchill and the Tory party, consolidated his control over the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Mirror* groups, and presided over the purchase of 50% of the London weekday television franchise by the Associated Newspapers. The new company, Associated Rediffusion, was a real coup and asset for Esmond that he threw away when, easily discouraged by AR's early losses, he sold the group's holdings in the firm during 1957.

Bourne describes Esmond's style of management as "essentially defensive" (173) and this was well apparent when Associated Newspapers bought the pro-Liberal *News Chronicle* and *The Star* from the Cadbury family. he thought this purchase would protect the *Daily Mail* and *Evening News* by enhancing their circulation, but this did not occur because the readers of the Cadbury papers failed to accept the Tory *Daily Mail*. Slack management and television were also intruding on all evening paper sales and threatening the future of Associated Newspapers. Meanwhile, Esmond, almost seventy, married for the third time in 1966, to an ambitious Texas divorcee who soon produced a son and changed his work habits. With her encouragement, Esmond assumed a very active role in the management of his papers, much to the discomfort of their staffs, as he fretted about the sharp decline in circulation and the losses incurred by the Associated Newspapers group. After much travail, Esmond resigned as Chairman of the group in

favor of his eldest son, Vere, in 1971. As Vere proceeded to economize by merging the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Sketch* — with painful losses of jobs for *Mail* employees — and to transform the *Mail* into "a new brand...middle-market tabloid, attractive to women, the aspiring middle class, and chic..." (181), Esmond faded into retirement and died in 1978.

Educated in the U.S.A. and at Eton, Vere Harmsworth failed to qualify for Oxford and, unable to secure a commission, performed his national service in the ranks. A slow-starter, he blossomed when he joined the Associated Newspapers and for two decades worked in a variety of jobs in the firm. By the time he became Vice-Chairman of the group in 1963, Vere's major interest was resuscitating the *Daily Mail.*

In 1957, Vere married a film starlet, the divorcee Mrs. Patricia Brooks, who soon became renowned (as "Bubbles" Rothermere) for her chic apparel, ubiquitous partying, and association with "creative" people. Yet, she helped Vere overcome his shyness, an alleged drinking problem, and difficulties with his father and provided him with two daughters and a male heir. By the time he succeeded his father in 1978 as the 3rd Viscount Rothermere, Vere had little opportunity to inspire confidence in his ability. But with the help of the editor of the Mail, David English, and the Managing Director, Mick Shields, and a devoted staff, Vere evolved his concept of a new tabloid Daily Mail as a "well-written, well laid out paper with drive and sparkle" and ardently pro-Tory. Of course, this metamorphosis entailed large scale redundancies and it was not until 1973 that the new Daily Mail recovered from a sharp fall in circulation and began to rise in sales. Vere Rothermere had proved himself a worthy successor in the Northcliffe dynasty and demonstrated that "what marks out the Harmsworths,...[as]...a family publishing house..., is their staying power..."(239).

This well-balanced work, enriched by a detailed family chart, fine photographs, and a serviceable Index, is a pleasure to read. It will be difficult to surpass as a major history of the Harmsworth dynasty.

Thomas B. Connery. *A Sourcebook of American Literary Journalism: Representative Writers in an Emerging Genre.* New York: Greenwood Press, 1992. Reviewed by Jan Whitt, University of Colorado

"I'm a journalist at heart; even as a novelist, I'm first of all a journalist. I think all novels should be journalism to start, and if you can ascend from that plateau to some marvelous altitude, terrific. I really don't think it's possible to understand the individual without understanding the society."

— Tom Wolfe, "Master of His Universe"

"Here is evidence, surely, of the true reporter's eye for those telling bits of reality that lend scale and texture to the larger picture. Such an eye belongs also, of course. to the true literary writer, which is one reason we are not surprised when journalist and novelist merge in a single person."

— Giles Fowler, "John Steinbeck"

As editor and author of *A Sourcebook of American Literary Journalism: Representative Writers in an Emerging Genre,* Thomas B. Connery is nothing if not courageous.

The very title of his 1992 book testifies to the difficulties inherent in writing about the likes of Samuel Clemens, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Joan Didion, Tom Wolfe, John McPhee and others. Literary journalism is in no way an "emerging genre" when one remembers its earliest practitioners; critics are, however, only beginning the struggle to categorize, to understand and to do justice to the men and women who 1) began their literary careers working for American newspapers and/or 2) employ the literary techniques defined and described during the reign of New Journalism.

The task involved in grouping those we now call "literary journalists" has just begun. Critics such as Shelley Fisher Fishkin (*From Fact to Fiction*) and Norman Sims (*The Literary Journalists* and *Literary Journalists in the Twentieth Century*) waded in years ago, and a few hardy professors have built fences around small sections of the vast territory and have taught classes in the new genre. Still, critics must wrestle with semantics and must continue to deal with the distinctions between terms such as "literary journalism," "personal journalism," "New journalism," "parajournalism," "creative nonfiction," "nonfiction novels," "new reportage," "Literary nonfiction." "artistic nonfiction," etc.

Connery goes to the heart of the issue in his provocative introduction, "Discovering a Literary Form." Citing Tom Wolfe, Barbara Lounsberry, Alan Trachtenberg, Jon Franklin, Edwin Ford, Archibald MacLeish. Norman Sims, Ronald Weber, James E Murphy, John Hollowell, R. Thomas Berner and James Agee, Connery maneuvers through myriad perspectives on the merging of literature and journalism and establishes a central promise that govern his collection. Connery writes:

> Use of the word "journalism" is preferred over "nonfiction" because the works assigned to this literary form are neither essays nor commentary. It also is preferred because much of the content of the works comes from traditional means of news gathering or reporting, including interviews, document review, and observation. Finally, journalism implies an immediacy, as well as a sense that what is being written about has a relevance peculiar to its time and place.
>
> Use of the word "literary" is more problematic than the use of "journalism." The word "literary" is not meant to suggest that journalism is not a part of literature, or that literary journalism is literature and most daily journalism and magazine journalism is not. Nor should it be thought of as an attempt to categorize a specific kind of journalistic writing as more artistic, and perhaps elite, although occasionally that may be the case. "Literary" is used because it says that while the work considered is journalistic, for the reasons just cited, its purpose is not just informational. A purely journalistic work is structured to convey information. primarily facts and authoritative viewpoints, clearly and efficiently. In a literary work, and in literary journalism, style becomes part of the meaning conveyed; the structure and organization of language interpret and inform. (p. 15)

In defining terms in this way, Connery allows for what he appropriately calls the "poet reporter" and the "Romantic reporter." He thereby acknowledges the importance of immersion, description, narration and other techniques familiar to those who study literary journalism and makes them more than strategies. The techniques become vehicles to move a writer — and, by implication. a reader — to-

ward what T. S. Eliot would call the "still point of the turning world." one's personal center.

As Connery and many of his essayists know well. news is not a collection of facts, no matter how finely arranged, and newsgathering is not merely the recording of a source's words. Within each human event is meaning, meaning that sometimes propels those involved in it toward other events, or toward a governing philosophy, or into relationship. Exterior events contain images and symbols that participants and observers transform into interior reality. And if the events and people with whom we come in contact transform us, they most assuredly transform the reporters who cover the news.

What follows Connery's introduction are 35 representatives of literary journalism and the critics who have begun to carve out the "emerging genre" of literary journalism:

1. Mark Twain	Jack A. Nelson
2. Richard Harding Davis	Patricia Bradley
3. Stephen Crane	Michael Robertson
4. Jacob A. Riis	Howard Good
5. Abraham Cahan	Bruce J. Evensen
6. Lincoln Steffens	Peter Parisi
7. George Ade	John J. Pauly
8. Hutchins Hapgood	Thomas B. Connery
9. William Hard	Ronald S. Marmarelli
10. Theodore Dreiser	Marilyn Ann Moss
11. John Reed	Robert E. Humphrey
12. Ring Lardner	Donald R. Hettinga
13. Damon Runyon	John J. Pauly
14. Dorothy Day	Nancy Roberts
15. Ernest Hemingway	Paul Ashdown
16. James Agee	Paul Ashdown
17. Joseph Mitchell	Norman Sims
18. John Hersey	Dan R. Jones
19. John Steinbeck	Giles Fowler
20. Lillian Ross	Arthur W. Roberts
21. Truman Capote	Gary L. Whitby
22. Tom Wolfe	Richard A. Kaflan
23. Gay Talese	Carol Polsgrove
24. Hunter S. Thompson	Arthur J. Kaul
25. Michael Herr	Donald Ringnalda
26. Norman Mailer	Anna Banks
27. Joe Eszterhas	Jack Lule
28. C.D.B. Bryan	R. Thomas Berner
29. Jane Kramer	Steve Jones
30. Richard Ben Cramer	Robert Schmuhl
31. John McPhee	Sharon Bass
32. Joan Didion	Sandra Braman
33. Bob Greene	Steve Jones
34. Joe Mcinniss	Linda Steiner
35. Tracy Kidder	John M. Coward

The journeys into the lives of these literary journalists and the critical analysis of their work are brief, precise and insightful. The critics clearly respect their subjects:

Nancy Roberts rightly defines journalism as "one of the few socially acceptable Ways for women in radical movements to function as activists" and cites Catholic writer Dorothy Day as being one who believed that a story should exist "to move the hear,. stir the will to action, to arouse Pity, Compassion. to awaken the conscience" (p. 179).

Gary L. Whitby proudly summarizes the work of Truman Capote by writing: "What glitters most, perhaps, is Capote's remarkable memory for dialogue and scene. The former is rendered so convincingly as to make the reader believe that the author used a tape recorder. He did not." (p. 241).

Jack A. Nelson's prose is infused with the energy of Twain's own conviction: "He burns with mining fever like the other early prospectors in Nevada; he exults in owning his own timber tract before burning it down out of carelessness; he imbibes the invigorating life of Virginia City and the madness of speculation in mining stocks: he is aghast at territorial government" (p. 51).

Marilyn Ann Moss provides a riveting first sentence in her essay: "Theodore Dreiser's journalistic writing was a configuration of factual data that ultimately coalesced into a personal mythos — a tale of how a young journalist might invent himself as a spokesman for American lives at the turn of the century" (p. 143).

The 32 critics remain a fair-minded lot, with even Connery acknowledging the limitations of his subject, Hutchins Hapgood, and criticizing one of Hapgood's works for "insufficient atmosphere, lack of a larger significance, insufficient development of unifying themes, and an overdependence upon the commentary and words of the principal subject" (p. 128).

The "true reporter's eye" does indeed provide "those telling bits of reality that lend scale and texture to the larger picture," as Giles Fowler writes. And no one involved in *A Sourcebook of American Literary Journalism* takes issue with Fowler's belief that the journalist and novelist often merge in a single person. Whether literary journalists consider themselves first and foremost journalists (as do Tom Wolfe and others), they must nonetheless accept the honor and the responsibility of helping their readers to move into an interior world to see into what poet William Wordsworth once called "the life of things."

Blanche Wisen Cook. *Eleanor Roosevelt: Vol. 1, 1884-1933*. Viking, 1992. 587 pp. $27.50 Cloth. Reviewed by Maurine H. Beasley, University of Maryland — College Park

The author, a professor of history and women's studies at John Jay College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York, has worked for more than a decade to gather new material on Eleanor Roosevelt, who, it can be argued, was the most visible and influential woman in the world of the mid-twentieth century. Unfortunately, as far as this volume is concerned, Cook came up with relatively little that was not previously known concerning Roosevelt's early life. This book tells a tale familiar to those interested in the Roosevelt saga — how she emerged from being an unloved child and suppressed wife and mother into a warm, extroverted political figure in her own right, prepared to make an impact

on the nation and world as First Lady after her husband, Franklin D. Roosevelt, was elected president in 1932.

What is new in this book is Cook's attempt to probe into Roosevelt's intimate relationships, examining what she calls "that core subject so intriguing to students of life, that place where sex and power converge." References to Roosevelt's key relationships have been part of the Roosevelt literature f or years, including speculation about the platonic aspect of her marriage after she discovered her husband's infidelity in the World War I era, her rumored affair with Earl Miller, a handsome New York state policeman, and her intense emotional involvement with Lorena Hickok, a journalist believed to have been a lesbian. Previously, however, these relationships and others have been glossed over as insignificant aspects of Roosevelt's life in comparison to her career as an humanitarian. Cook is the first historian to attempt to look into these relationships carefully, confident that they picture Roosevelt as a passionate free spirit, seeking to become a completely modern woman while living in an "open" marriage.

Yet Cook is not able to provide all the historical evidence that she needs to make her case. Thus, the reader is left wondering more about Roosevelt than Cook, who admires her greatly, seems willing to comment on. It appears from Cook's somewhat inconclusive evidence that Roosevelt may have lived a kind of double life — on the one hand posing as a model wife and mother and on the other hand doing exactly what she wanted to in terms of conduct that would have shocked many of her admirers. One hopes that in the planned future volumes of her work, Cook will be able to present more proof for her assertions.

John Corner, editor. *Popular Television in Britain.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press) $19.95 paper, $49.95 Cloth. Reviewed by Steve Jones, University of Tulsa

If this book were judged by its cover, which incorporates the subtitle "Studies in Cultural History," it would not be inappropriate for the pulse to quicken; after all, Britain, and British cultural studies, have formed the foundation of many exciting ideas for students of media and mass communication. And what is lacking in studies of British media is an analysis of television's early history, which is just what this book appears to be.

Upon closer examination, though, the book tantalizes only to dash one's hopes. It is quite lacking for a theoretical foundation within which the dozen collected essays can serve as a means of understanding the connections between culture, politics and television. Moreover, such a lack makes it difficult for readers unfamiliar with British television of the 1950s and 1960s to connect with the essays; they haven't a resonance one has come to expect from cultural studies. Consequently, it is vital to not misread the subtitle. This is indeed a cultural *history* and not a cultural *study.*

Several of the essays do stand out and make valuable reading. "Documentary Voices," by John Corner, is an outstanding, lucid account of the development of documentary television in Britain. Corner connects the development of the documentary in relation to British film and radio documentary. He asks some particularly interesting questions concerning documentaries' ability to "voice the social," and makes some startling observations concerning the relationship between the public and private in social documentary, among them that there was a

"community aesthetic" at work as a formative strand in British television documentary.

Another noteworthy essay is John Hill's "Television and Pop," a somewhat dry rendering of the roots of pop music on television. Its importance lies in its ability to rethink the ways in which British popular music was repackaged for television in the 1950s and 1960s, a period obviously important to popular music's development. The issues and concerns Hill identifies during this period (balancing "teenage tastes and adult interests," conflicts over presentation, performance, and public opinion) are ongoing in the present, "straight outta MTV," as a rap artist might say.

One of the elements lacking in the book is organization. For instance, a very good essay by Tim O'Sullivan, "Television Memories and Cultures of Viewing, 1950-65," is placed near the end of the book rather than the beginning, where it could serve, in a manner of speaking, to introduce readers to British television viewers and viewing. It is perhaps this sort of oversight that makes it difficult to recommend the book, because it seems to lack a fundamental connection to social and cultural issues.

In fact, it is quite shocking to find only a handful of references in the entire book to Raymond Williams, one for Stuart Hall, and just one for Richard Hoggart. Granted, this is a history of British television. Yet writers like these are themselves historians, insofar as they blend their life histories and those of others into a powerful critique of British society. The essayists gathered in *Popular Television in Britain* are (for the most part) only concerned with teasing out details related to production, minutiae collected to form a detailed history but not, as Clifford Geertz would call it, a thick description.

That the book provides a valuable history is difficult to dispute. That it could provide much, much more, is equally certain. That it does not provide more is a shame, because the programs and policies described herein had an impact on British society and culture (and on much of western culture and society as well). This particular period in British television's development is largely undocumented, and so to find a book addressing it is decidedly noteworthy. It is dismaying to find that it contains little in the way of understanding that period's connection to the larger social and cultural issues that make that period so interesting and important.

Ronald Edsforth and Larry Bennett, eds. *Popular Culture and Political Change in Modern America.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991. 222 pp. $14.95 Paper. Reviewed by Jack Lule, Lehigh University

When Vice President Dan Quayle wanted to discuss family values, he critiqued a television show, "Murphy Brown." When Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton wished to address charges of marital infidelity, he did so on "60 Minutes" and then "Donahue." When Ross Perot tested the waters for his own presidential bid, he fielded questions on "Larry King Live." When George Bush set out goals for his own campaign, he did so primarily through television advertisements on prime-time television.

Popular culture has become an essential aspect of the modern political process, providing language, contexts and sites for political action in this country.

Links between popular culture and political life, however, are not particularly

easy to trace. Usually, scholars have worked to understand the audience's embrace of popular culture vehicles, or simply the vehicles themselves. At their best, studies of romance novels, cockfights, Madonna, "The Cosby Show," the Super Bowl, and "60 Minutes" make clear the varied ways that popular culture can serve as a text with which to read social and political life.

Perhaps even more difficult to study, however, is the other side of the equation: The historical and political creation, use and control of popular culture by powerful groups and individuals. This is the subject taken up in *Popular Culture and Political Change in Modern America,* a volume in the SUNY series on popular culture and political change.

Quite appropriately, the book argues that popular culture "has frequently functioned to advance the political agendas of powerful groups and ambitious individuals." And it defines popular culture as a realm of history where power is always being used and contested.

The editors, Ronald Edsforth, of the history department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Larry Bennett, of the political science department at DePaul University, have assembled a varied cast, including a sociologist, two political scientists, a cultural anthropologist, and three historians.

Seven subjects are pursued: the march by "Coxey's Army" of unemployed workers in 1894; progressive reform, censorship and the motion picture industry, 1909-1917; the press and the Red scare, 1919-1921; mass culture among Chicago workers in the 1920s; affluence and anti-communism among automobile workers, 1933-1973; *The Catcher in the Rye* censorship debate, and the domestication of rock music.

The approach is to delineate in varying degrees the creation and production of popular culture by those in power or those in opposition to power. From this perspective, the Red scare of 1919-1921 is seen in part as manipulation and machination by newspaper publishers to thwart the unionization of their workers. The censorship of motion pictures and *The Catcher in the Rye* are understood within larger contexts of political motivations and personal ambitions. Likewise, a march on Washington and a Jimi Hendrix guitar performance are viewed as political acts in opposition to prevailing social and cultural restraints.

Introductory and closing chapters by Edsforth and Bennett place these works in the context of the mass culture debate and the Frankfurt School's critique of the culture industry. Edsforth writes with evident nostalgia for the political-popular culture connections forged in the 1960s, which led to the influential work of Herbert Gutman and Warren Susman, pioneers in the scholarly study of political influence and popular culture. By the early 1980s, Edsforth noes, scholars had made "every aspect of everyday life and popular culture a valid subject for political analysis."

Political uses of popular culture by the Reagan administration, Edsforth argues, only intensified the need for study of the links between popular culture and politics. During the Reagan years, "national political campaigns became completely submerged in popular culture," he says. Too, Reagan and his advisors "were skilled producers of popular culture," with politically rich extravaganzas such as the Statue of Liberty celebration, the First Inaugural Weekend, and many symbol-laden trips abroad.

This focus on the historical and political creation of popular culture is a valuable one. Certainly the focus would have sharpened with reference to interna-

tional contexts where many nations for years have artfully and brutally used popular culture for political ends. Yet the aim of this volume is true: Language, contexts and arenas for politics are now found in and taken from popular culture.

Michael Emery and Edwin Emery. *The Press and America: An Interpretive History of the Mass Media, Seventh Edition.* Prentice Hall, 1992. xiv + 715 pp. $56.00 Cloth. Reviewed by Phyllis Zagano, Boston University

We can figure our age by counting the editions of Emery on our office shelves and multiplying by ten or eleven. The first came out in 1954, the most recent early in 1992. While the 38 years between the first and the latest edition of this book are packed with technology and tension in the world of journalism, there is a marked shift in the current 715 page text between pages 264 and 265, from print to broadcasting, and then again from 566 to 567, from communications media to media technology. Some newer topics spring up earlier — there is a glance at women and Hispanic writers early on, along with mentions of advertising — but journalism history from *Acta Diurna* to the *Masses* remains pretty much the same.

It is after World War I that the book splits into rivulets, each running its own course. While "the press" is still in *The Press and America*, the professor of journalism history might find this book more than he bargained for. If the typical history of journalism class is just that, a study of the history of print media in the United States, then the television history, radio history, advertising history and public relations history included in this behemoth are unnecessary. If print history is uppermost, one almost longs for a reprint of Frank Luther Mott, or even James Melvin Lee.

The size of this text bespeaks the current discussions in journalism schools over whether a one- or two-semester journalism history course is better, and whether journalism history is solely of print media, or of all communication media, or of those plus advertising and public relations as well. If the course in question is intended as a broad history for the general communications major, either one or two semesters long, then there is certainly more than enough in this book. This is equally true if the program of study moves from media history to the social impact of mass media. Yet larger institutions, which have separate departments for journalism, broadcasting, film, advertising and public relations, might find this edition of Emery too broad to suit any of its specific publics, even as a general introductory text. Smaller schools, including those that lean more toward the liberal arts, might find the size (and price) too daunting for a one-semester all-purpose history of media course.

How you react to the text depends on how you define journalism studies. For most American journalism historians, the first general historical account is probably John Elliott's "A Narrative of the Newspapers Printed in New England," from the 1798 *Proceedings* of the Massachusetts Historical Society (later continued in the Society's *Collections*, along with a sketch of Connecticut papers by Noah Webster, in 1800). The field is replete with honorable names: Isaiah Thomas (*History of Printing in America*, 1810), Joseph Tinker Buckingham (*Specimens of Newspaper Literature*, 1850), Charles Dudley Warner (*The American Newspaper*, 1881), James Melvin Lee (*History of American Journalism*, 1917), W. G. Bleyer (*History of American Journalism*, 1927), Frank Lu-

ther Mott (*American Journalism*, 1927) and Robert W. Jones (*Journalism in the United States*, 1947). Each has his perspective on how the press has shaped America and how America has returned the favor.

The Press and America began life in 1954 as a text co-authored by Edwin Emery (Minnesota) and Henry Ladd Smith. Michael Emery (California State, Northridge) first joined the effort with the Third Edition, and since then over 50 journalism professors have critically scanned manuscripts of various editions. It is impossible, at this point, for there to be any mistakes of fact. One recent omission that might make the text less useful for introductory graduate courses is the elimination of some secondary data and older bibliographical citations.

If there is a trouble with teaching from Emery it is that high school (and, increasingly, college) graduates do not know very much about American history. They are well-schooled in polemics but come up short on facts. Even American Studies, once an interesting grouping of literature, political science, history, art, and sociology has splintered into even smaller slices in the kaleidoscope, forming no background for the serious study of journalism history. Without that context it is impossible to move from John Peter Zenger to *Times v. Sullivan* and back again without several twenty minute diversions. This is compounded by the fact that too many communications or journalism majors think smiling and reading a teleprompter without looking shifty are the two principal skills to be learned in school. How can the concepts breezed through in Emery be taught to people who never have, and never will again, hear of Hamilton, Madison and Jay? How will any depth be achieved with classrooms full of individuals who will not read Tom Paine, will not read Tom Wolfe, and in fact will not read, period?

It is a sad commentary that superficiality is the result of the topic under consideration, and the topic can only be superficially covered because of it. To what degree pre-digested information from electronic media has disabled the critical abilities of this decade's students is becoming painfully evident as they move to create or control media outlets where transvestite prostitutes and on-air psychotherapy are the order of the day. A simplistic evaluation of political discussion has resulted from free speech coming to mean "your idea is equal to mine" and a growing irrelevancy of fact.

It is hard to determine how the collision of bad preparation of students and the pre-determined agenda from television reportage form the final chapter of this edition, "Media Technology: The Challenge of the 1990s." This is an all-purpose This-Is-Where-We-Are-And-Are-Going chapter that begins with some critical reflection on the America of the 1990s with the unsubstantiated depth and breadth of TV reporting ("The Gulf War cost taxpayers up to $1 billion per day, while federal, state, and local health and education programs were cut.... Millions of Americans mobilized to save the environment, but the U. S. government consistently refused to join in worldwide plans to save the oceans and the atmosphere."), and ends invoking James Franklin and Edward R. Murrow. It moves with dizzying speed to list the new technologies, so new that they cannot be effectively evaluated in relation to the real and recurrent issues of the day: peace, poverty, and power. It does not talk about photonics.

But no matter if or where we disagree with Emery and Emery's product, it is worth sitting down with some afternoon. It is worth taking a magnifying glass and reading the report on the Kennedy-Nixon debates from the front page of a

1960 *Christian Science Monitor*, or thinking again about the headline "Dewey Defeats Truman." It is worth Joseph Pulitzer and Matthew Brady and Margaret Fuller. It is worth it because journalism history is worth it.

Victor Fischer and Michael D. Frank, eds. *Mark Twain's Letters*. Vol. 3: 1869. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. Reviewed by Jan Whitt, University of Colorado

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910) put on the mantle of humorist in order to critique a nation that did not measure up to his vision of the American dream. *Mark Twain's Letters* (Vol. 3) is a collection of 188 of his epistles from 1869, epistles written primarily to Olivia L. Langdon, whom he would marry the following year.

Growing up in an idyllic setting on the banks of the Mississippi in Hannibal, Missouri, the young Clemens watched the parade of people, wagons and horses as it moved along the streets and wharves of the town. The memory of things past fueled much of his work until his masterpieces *Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Huckleberry Finn* (1885).

Beginning at 18, Twain traveled to cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Washington and Cincinnati. As an itinerant newspaper reporter, Twain mailed letters about his travels to his brother, who published them in the Muscatine *Journal*.

Falling in love with the river, Clemens became a pilot, adopting the name "Mark Twain," a nautical term meaning "safe water." The outbreak of the Civil War put an end to Clemens' plans for life on the river, and Clemens returned to travel and to journalism. Like many other literary journalists (including Stephen Crane, Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, Ernest Hemingway and others), Clemens longed to support himself by writing fiction; in the meantime, he worked for newspapers such as the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise* (1862).

Associated with journalists such as Bret Harte, Clemens gained fame in 1865 when "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" was published in the New York *Saturday Press*. He was given a commission by the San Francisco *Alta California* to write a series of travel letters, making it possible for him to go to Europe and the Holy Land, a journey that resulted in *The Innocents Abroad* (I869). The book became a best seller and led to a successful lecture tour.

The letters that appear in *Mark Twain's Letters* (Vol. 3) were penned during one of Clemens' busiest and most frustrating years. They are also a record of great love for Langdon, who would become Clemens' wife and would remain so for 34 years. Because the two were separated much of the time, few days passed in 1869 that Clemens did not write to Langdon.

According to the editors, nearly half of the courtship letters Clemens wrote to her between the time she refused his initial proposal (September 1868) and the month they were married (February 1870) are lost. Those included to "My Dearest Livy" in *Mark Twain's Letters* (Vol. 3) are the longest he ever wrote and testify to a great longing for companionship and hope for the future.

For example, Clemens wrote the following to Langdon Jan. 7, 1869:

> Let me pay my due homage to your worth; let me honor you above all women, let me love you with a love that knows no doubt, no question — for

> you are my *world*, my life, my pride, my all of earth that is worth the having. Develop your faults, if you have them — they have no terrors for me — *nothing* shall tear you out of my heart. Livy, if you only *knew* how much I love you! But I couldn't make you comprehend it, though I wrote a year.

And on Aug. 8, 1869, he writes:

> Livy darling, often during this lonesome day I have found myself saying unconsciously, "I will never make her unhappy any more." This is an emanation of a guilty conscience.... Always, as soon as we are separated, I begin to think of how many things I ought to have done which I did not do, and failed to give you happiness that it lay in my power to give you. And I keep on accusing until I hate myself.

In 1870, Clemens married Langdon and became managing editor and one-third owner of the *Buffalo Express*, thanks largely to financial help from Langdon's father. In all his work, Clemens was able to satirize a land and a people he loved and to point out the flaws only in an effort to resurrect the American principle of happiness and equality for all.

Mark Twain's Letter (Vol. 3) is a stunning publication with careful attention paid to detail, including the cover, which displays the facsimile of a letter written by Clemens to Langdon Feb. 13, 1869, and photos of Clemens. Funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the volume contains primarily previously unpublished letters that, as the book jacket says, were "meticulously transcribed, either from the original manuscripts (when extant) or from the most reliable sources now available."

Annotated and indexed, the book contains genealogical charts of the Clemens and Langdon families, a schedule of Clemens' lecture tours, the facsimiles of the promotional materials he helped create for his lectures and for *The Innocents Abroad*, photographs of Clemens' family and friends, a calendar of Clemens' courtship letters, and a few original letter manuscripts in facsimile. *Mark Twain's Letters* (Vol. 3) is the third in the only complete edition of Clemens' letters, which contains approximately I0,000 epistles. It is the 21st in the edition known as *The Mark Twain Papers and Works of Mark Twain*, under the direction of general editor Robert H. Hirst.

The editors have gained recognition as reliable scholars of Clemens: Victor Fischer is co-editor of *The Prince and the Pauper* (1979) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (I988). Michael B. Frank is co-editor of *Mark Twain's Notebooks and Journals* (1975 and 1979) and the first volume of *Mark Twain's Letters* (1988).

Carol Sue Humphrey. *"This Popular Engine": New England Newspapers during the American Revolution, 1775-1789*. University of Delaware Press, 1992. 204 pp. Reviewed by Karen K. List, University of Massachusetts

This book takes a close look at New England newspapers in the Revolutionary era, helping to explain why one Tory at the time called the papers, which had become many people's source of public affairs information, "this popular engine." Humphrey writes in her introduction that while historians have written

about "the propaganda sheets of the 1760s — early 1770s and the political party organs of the 1790s...[the] years in between have remained...a virtual blank." She distinguishes her work from Arthur Schlesinger's *Prelude to Independence,* which considers the years prior to the war itself and ends with the Declaration of Independence, and Philip Davidson's *Propaganda of the American Revolution,* which looks at the war years, but in a broader fashion. While the study is limited geographically, Humphrey says that limitation is outweighed by the fact that New England published more influential papers than did other parts of the country, as well as papers that were longer-lived. She sees her work as a "scholarly bridge" between the early years of the Revolution and the later party press era.

The book does provide an impressive compilation of information. The first five chapters look at growth of New England papers prior to 1775, printing as a business, the printers themselves and their relationships with the public and the government. The next three chapters — and the most interesting — deal with the politics of the papers from 1775-81, a time of unity; 1782-86, a time of division; and 1787-89, a time of common concerns. The last chapter assesses the papers' role generally during the period. Many chapters include helpful maps, charts and tables. An appendix lists the papers, their printers and places and years of publication state by state. Documentation is impressive as is a lengthy bibliography at the book's end.

An acknowledgments section points out that several chapters in this book have been published previously as papers in *American Journalism* and *Journalism History.* That speaks to one of the book's weaknesses: it seems to be a compilation of papers on different topics that are not unified as effectively as they might be into a seamless whole. Some chapters are repetitive, and several are quite short. The first and shortest, "Growth and Development of New England Newspapers prior to 1775," is only three pages of text. It deals with the publications of Ben Harris, John Campbell and James Franklin in seven lines, without mentioning the latter two by name.

I learned little from this book about Revolutionary printers that I didn't already know. I found myself wishing throughout the book that her descriptive New England illustrations were better contextualized. And I sometimes disagreed with her conclusions. By the end of this period, Humphrey says, newspapers belonged to everyone. On the contrary, I would argue that while newspapers were democratized to some extent, they remained relatively elite into the nineteenth century.

Still, I would recommend this book as a valuable reference for anyone interested in New England newspapers during this volatile period in America's history.

Eric Homberger. *John Reed.* Manchester University Press, 1990. 248 pp. $29.95. Reviewed by Jack Lule, Lehigh University

The issue never seems to be resolved: Did John Reed — America's most famous Communist, chronicler of the 1917 Russian revolution, and the only American buried beneath the Kremlin Wall — forsake Communism in a death-bed conversion?

In our times, as Communism crumbles and the revolution that Reed recorded is disparaged and disgraced, the question becomes only more intriguing.

It lies waiting at the end of each biography and account of Reed. His first bi-

ographer, Granville Hicks, found no conversion. But Max Eastman and Emma Goldman, contemporaries of Reed, disputed Hicks' account and wrote of the disillusionment of Reed's final days. Louise Bryant, Reed's wife and colleague, challenged them, and Robert Rosenstone, a more recent Reed biographer, has sided with Bryant. Even Virginia Gardner's book o Bryant contains an appendix solely devoted to rebutting charges of Reed's conversion.

Eric Homberger has produced a book-length answer.

A professor in the School of English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia, Homberger strives to make clear Reed's extraordinary, life-long commitment to revolution and reporting. Although his book, one in the "Lives of the Left" series, derides the notion of any last-minute change of heart, by book's end the question has been rendered irrelevant. Reed's life, Homberger shows, was lived for and given to the Communist cause.

A politically grounded discussion of Reed's life certainly is in order. Too many people know Reed only as the depoliticized figure of Rosenstone's aptly titled *Romantic Revolutionary* The book was primary inspiration for the movie "Reds," Warren Beatty's romantic epic of Rosenstone's romantic epic. (it is no small irony of popular culture that the same man brought both John Reed and Dick Tracy to the silver screen.)

The temptation for biographers to treat Reed's life as a romantic adventure is understandable — his life, in large measure, was a romantic adventure.

In his short time, he encountered many of the leading figures of his age, including Lenin, Trotsky, Woodrow Wilson, William Jennings Bryan, and Pancho Villa. Among his classmates in the Harvard class of 1910 were Walter Lippmann and T.S. Eliot. Among his friends were Lincoln Steffens, Eugene O'Neill and Max Eastman. His romance with Louise Bryant — and her affair with O'Neill — was good gossip and scandal. His reporting in Mexico and Russia took him to two of the world's most extraordinary revolutions. His death from typhus in 1920 at age 33 was tragedy of high order.

But hard-core politicking always was an essential part of Reed's romance and adventure, and the man cannot really be understood outside of this context.

Homberger rightly portrays Reed as a driven activist, a superb organizer, and mostly a rabid political journalist whose beat was the revolt of the people.

Although Reed is best know for his classic, *Ten Days that Shook the World,* Homberger also highlights Reed's excellent writing on the Mexican revolution, his regular contributions to the *Masses* and other political journals, and his numerous political poems and plays. More excerpts of Reed's great work would have strengthened the discussion here, however.

Supporting his political theme, Homberger also employs newly declassified, U.S. government surveillance reports. It is not news that Reed was spied upon by U.S. authorities. Indeed, he was repeatedly arrested and was tried for espionage. The surveillance reports though show the extent of U.S. concern about Reed and affirm the often plodding, paranoid nature of intelligence agencies.

Homberger builds his political portrayal carefully, depicting in detail Reed's commitment and zeal. After reading of Reed's extreme efforts for the cause, a death-bed denial does not seem plausible or possible. Most likely, as Homberger suggests, wishful thinking by non-believers lies behind the rumored conversion.

So if Reed did live and give his life for Communism is he destined then for the dustbin of history along with other now disgraced Bolsheviks? Not a chance.

What will set Reed apart is what always set him apart: He was an inspired reporter and recorder of history. Although Reed's causes and commitments may fall from favor, his reporting will endure.

At Taliesin: Newspaper Columns by Frank Lloyd Wright and the Taliesin Fellowship. Compiled and with commentary by Randolph C. Henning. Southern Illinois University Press, 1992. 322 pp. $39.95. Reviewed by Glenn A. Himebaugh, Middle Tennessee State University

If you always thought Frank Lloyd Wright was a premier architect, you would have plenty of supporters. If, on the other hand, you envisioned Wright as a journalist, you would probably raise some eyebrows.

He was not, in fact, much of a journalist and probably never claimed to be one, but he did write at least 31 columns that appeared in southern Wisconsin newspapers in the 1930s. Some of them, along with a much larger number penned by his apprentices an coworkers in the Taliesin Fellowship, have been reprinted in an interesting book.

Compiled by Randolph C. Henning, an architect in Winston-Salem, N. C., who has lectured and written extensively about Wright, the book is described on its cover leaf as "an important addition to Wright studies" that "will prove invaluable to Wright scholars, biographers, and enthusiasts." There is no argument with that assessment, though its value to journalists and media historians is more likely to be tangential at best.

Wright did make some biting observations about the newspaper business in a column in August 1937. He had attended an architects' conference in Moscow and been chastised in a *Racine Journal* editorial. He also had come under fire for showing several Russian films at Taliesin.

Angered, he struck back in his column, noting, "My country cannot fairly question my loyalty nor doubt my service. The value of my contribution to American culture is a matter of record around the world."

Zeroing in on the press, Wright wrote, "it was bad luck for our citizens when the big corporation newspaper took over the crusading editor and his spirit passed away." Continuing, he charged, "The big newspaper, the big interests, big institutions of very kind — they are now the real menace to candor and veracity of every sort not favorable to the profit-motive."

In all, more than 55 contributors turned out 285 columns during a four-year period, 112 of which appear in this book.

Wright established the Taliesin Fellowship in 1932 at his 200-acre homestead some 30 miles west of Madison as a vehicle for broadly educating his protégés in what he termed the "organic" lifestyle.

Twenty or more apprentices at any given time lived, worked, studied, and played together at Taliesin under the influence of Wright and his wife, Olgivanna. Henning tells us that, "The apprentices worked alongside the Wrights more as family members than students under mentors."

The newspaper columns were begun as a vehicle to attract larger crowds from throughout the region to Taliesin's weekly film festivals, but they quickly expanded as each author was encouraged to write about whatever interested him or her.

In his autobiography, Wright would explain the philosophy behind the col-

umns, noting, "Architects, I thought, had need to be especially articulate." Henning says that Wright himself reviewed "and sometimes heavily edit[ed]" the columns.

Just how articulate the columns actually were is a matter for subjective judgment, of course. Those in the book appear to vary widely in journalistic quality, as one would expect of pieces written by creative, but journalistically untrained, people.

At the very least, however, the book has merit in terms of bringing alive again the milieu surrounding one of America's most influential figures of his day.

Peter E. Kane. *Errors, Lies, and Libel.* Foreword by Elmer Gertz. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992. 171 pp. $19.95 Cloth; $12.95 Paper. Reviewed by Dorothy Bowles, University of Tennessee

Peter E. Kane, a professor in communication at SUNY at Brockport, uses more than a dozen well-known defamation cases, each discussed in varying detail, to demonstrate how the law and the courts have confronted difficult questions about libel law, as well as the basic dilemma underlying them. Beginning with *New York Times v. Sullivan* in 1964, and ending with *Sharon v. Time* and *Westmoreland v. CBS* in 1984, the author deviates from the usual casebook treatment by emphasizing the personal stories of the parties involved, explaining the social and political settings for the litigation, and giving details about the cases as they unfolded during the discovery process and at the trial level. Kane uses basic storytelling techniques, unencumbered with legal terminology or documentation, to explain how the law of libel has evolved since the Supreme Court constitutionalized it in 1964.

With *Herbert v. Lando* and Barry Goldwater's suit against *fact* magazine, Kane illustrates how evidence in a libel case is accumulated and presented for jury consideration and why establishing actual malice is a demanding task. The author takes readers through *Gertz v. Welch* and *Time v. Firestone* to show, among other points, that it is sometimes difficult to establish the public or private figure status of libel plaintiffs. In a chapter titled "The Rules of Libel — Beyond Comprehension," the author describes the litigation involving Mobile Oil President William Tavoulareas and the Washington Post and the conflict between the Alton, Illinois, *Telegraph* and a local building contractor. For information about the former case, Kane draws heavily on Steven Brill's piece published in *The American Lawyer,* and most of the story about the *Alton Telegraph's* encounter with libel has been described in Thomas Littlewood's book, *Coals of Fire.* Kane's main point in recounting these two cases is that the law of libel has become too complex for the typical jury to understand and to apply correctly.

Like several earlier commentators, Kane portrays the lawsuits of Generals Westmoreland and Sharon as meritless cases filed for political motives and argues that both should have been dismissed with summary judgments for the defendants. The political motives for Westmoreland's suit against CBS, Kane says, were a desire on the part of the general's far right-wing supporters to deter CBS from undertaking programming critical of conservative causes and to place responsibility for the loss of the Vietnam War on the news media. The author joins others in asserting that Renat Adler, in her pieces in *The New Yorker* and

her book *Reckless Disregard,* tried to accomplish those same political goals, scapegoating Westmoreland's principal attorney in the process, after the general's suit was settled out of court.

Kane's book breaks no new ground, but his accounts of the factual situations that sparked defamation claims make interesting reading and could provide teachers with little known details to weave into class lectures. We learn, for example, that the original confrontation giving rise to *Gertz v. Welch* took place in an alley next to a hot dog stand near Wrigley Field.

Richard B. Kielbowicz, *News in the Mail: The Press, Post Office, and Public Information, 1700-1860s*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1989. 221 pp., $39.95. Reviewed by Richard Digby-Junger, Western Michigan University

The historian of colonial or frontier journalism is aware of the unique relationship between the press and the U.S. Post Office. As an example of how strong and necessary that association was, consider the plight of one territorial Wisconsin journalist who complained in 1845, "A block head is as fit for a postmaster as a butcher is to practice obstetrics."

That is the reason Richard B. Kielbowicz's *News in the Mail* is such an important and long awaited contribution to journalism history. Kielbowicz, a professor of communications at the University of Washington and a former consultant on governmental communication policy, describes the development of the post office and the flow of information in the early United States from the appearance of the first newspapers in the early 1700s until the advent of the transcontinental telegraph in 1861. He also discusses related topics including the development of magazines, books, and express mail, and the use of the mails for news gathering.

This book makes at least two major contributions to the literature. It documents the connection that existed between the early newspapers and the post office. The link was so close that about one out of every five newspapers and magazines reached readers through the mail in 1850, and printed matter made up half of all mail pieces during the majority of the nineteenth century.

It also illustrates how and why the federal government subsidized the early press through postal rates of less than cost, an important relationship that has eluded many scholars of this period. To demonstrate this point, Kielbowicz chronicles the political debates and decisions that provided the press with its preferred position in relationship to the postal service. This relationship involved some of the most elementary political ideology of the young nation. Nationalists argued for expensive newspaper postal rates, thus encouraging the development of select national newspapers. The forces of regionalism argued that subsidized rates would encourage the development of many local papers. The regionalists eventually won out, explaining in part why truly national newspapers such as *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The New York Times*, took so many years to develop in the United States.

Kielbowicz's study is long overdue, but there a few disappointments. The scope and brevity of this book have necessitated a condensation of the topic matter and the reader finds himself or herself nearly lost by the pace at times. The author devotes only two paragraphs to postal censorship during the critical Alien and Sedition era and a mere paragraph to the censorship of abolitionist mail.

Kielbowicz defends this treatment by pointing to other studies in his footnotes, but the reader wishes for more within his pages. The author has also made exemplary use of primary sources and statistics to document his contentions about the post office, but a disappointing number of journalistic quotations come from secondary sources. The effect is to overemphasize the post office at the expense of newspapers and their makers.

These shortcomings aside, News in the Mail is a valuable book in an important serious on American history. Kielbowicz has provided a strong and interesting presentation of a long neglected aspect of early journalism history.

It should be noted that in the intervening years since this book was published and review written, Richard R. John's *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996) has appeared, adding to Kielbowicz's path breaking work.

Lauren Kessler. *After All These Years: Sixties Ideals in a Different World.* New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1990. 240 pp., $13.95 Paper. Reviewed by Roy E. Blackwood, Bemidji State University

After All These Years is divided by the author into four parts: "Social Justice," "Political Activism," "Right Livelihood," and "Counter/Culture." Each of the parts is further divided into three sections: a short analysis by Kessler of the decade of the 1960s, specific to the part it introduces; an interview with a famous (or infamous) person of the time; and eight or ten interviews with what a publicity sheet calls, "less famous but equally committed individuals who...continue to champion the causes they believe in."

Kessler's analytical sections comprise about 45 pages and include a short, insightful history of events leading to the period. Kessler writes well, and her analysis is both interesting and perceptive. Had she so used 150 or 200 more pages, her book would have been well worth reading.

Instead, she turned those pages over to, as the book's publicist quotes Studs Terkel, "revealing portraits of some of our unsung heroes and heroines." Unlike the interviewees in Terkle's works, however, Kessler's all have much the same thing to say.

Kessler does not make clear why she includes interviews with Angela Davis, Tom Hayden, Gloria Steinem, and Arlo Guthrie at the beginnings of the respective parts. In her preface, however, she thanks people for clearing paths and for helping her reach these well-known activists, giving the impression that she wanted them for the "name recognition" value they would have for readers.

The book's other major flaw is in Kessler's seeming premise that sixties activism is causal to all that is good in current society. This stance is in response to what she describes in her introduction as the view of "economic interests" that the sixties were "merely a fad." She claims that the media have made too much of such incidents as former activist Jerry Rubin's conversion to a "money-grubbing stockbroker," and former *Ramparts* editors Peter Collier's and David Horowitz's becoming "unabashed right-wing apologists."

She cites several academic studies that show "former sixties activists have gravitated toward the helping professions, shying away from business, management, large bureaucracies and formal politics. Not surprisingly, they are making significantly less money than their non-activist contemporaries."

These data are interesting and informative, but the generalized treatment they occasion throughout the rest of the book is as unwarranted as the media generalization Kessler objects to from a few highly publicized "turncoats."

Many of the 41 people interviewed have some connection with the media — writers or editors of underground newspapers in the sixties and seventies; freelance contributors to publications, radio, television, or film during the past three decades; or people whose current vocation or avocation is in some facet of the media. Kessler doesn't address whether this media orientation indicates a special connection between activism and media; is attributable to the fact that she, a former member of Students for a Democratic Society, is now a journalism professor; or results from chance.

In many of the short biographies that precede the interviews can be found much that might explain those people's commitment to social, political, and economic justice later in life — with or without their involvement in sixties activism. Part of Martha Honey's biography, for example, reads: "At thirteen, she became involved in a number of Quaker work camps, spending weekends in Harlem doing community projects." No surprise that she is socially and politically active at age 44, even without knowing that she was a draft resistance organizer in 1967.

In her preface, Kessler quotes an editor at a New York publishing house who rejected a proposal for *After All These Years*: "Although I can sympathize with [the editor's] view that not everybody has abandoned the values and activities that the sixties embodied, I'm afraid I feel that most people have." In reaction, Kessler says she wrote the book "to help foster a sense of community among...thousands, perhaps millions of sixties veterans out there struggling to live decent, socially conscious lives" and "to reach out to younger people, those whose view of the sixties and the veterans of that time has been almost completely obscured by media stereotypes."

She chose the interviewees to make her point. If she had been so inclined, she could have chosen from Jerry Rubin, Peter Collier, David Horowitz, and other "turncoats" to make the opposite point. In fact, the point she chose is valid. Had she chosen to allow more shades of gray, it would have been more convincing.

Soon Jin Kim. *EFE: Spain's World News Agency*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989. 268 pp. Reviewed by William A. Babcock, University of Minnesota

A number of books as well as academic and scholarly articles have been written for much of the 20th century about the big-four Western news agencies: Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), Reuters, and Agence France-Presse (AFP).

But until the 1989 publication of Soon Jin Kim's *EFE*, there had been no systematic study of the West's fifth-ranking news agency either in English- or Spanish-language publications. Dr. Kim, a professor at Towson State University in Baltimore and a former Central America foreign correspondent and a founding foreign-news editor of the Guatemalan daily, *La Nacion*, has crafted an informative, well-researched, and, for the most part, readable half-century history of Spain's government-controlled EFE news agency.

The author chronicles EFE's birth in 1936, taking the news enterprise through

the Franco era, World War II, the Cold War, and into the modern era. Professor Kim's book sometimes reads more like a conversational 20th century Spanish history text than it does a chronicle of EFE's growth. However, except for the most knowledgeable European scholars, this history infusion helps the reader place EFE within the context of the nation's development.

Professor Kim, born in Korea and educated in Japan, researched *EFE* at the organization's Madrid headquarters in 1985. This research, supported by a $20,000 Tinker Foundation grant, uncovered a variety of colorful vignettes. For example, the reader learns that EFE:

— Prohibited reporting of the 1939 coup attempt in Munich against Hitler.

— Blacklisted and prohibited the publication of names of 29 Hollywood-related professionals publicly supporting the Second Republic, including Bing Crosby, Joan Crawford, James Cagney, Bette Davis, Eddie Cantor, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Rudy Vallee, Charlie Chaplin, and script-writer Upton Sinclair.

— Was satirized by surrealist painter Salvador Dali for sensationalizing the spy-sex, scandal-laden Profumo Case because it was a British caper safe from Spanish sensors.

— Denied a 1976 *Washington Post* article charging that the Spanish news agency received a CIA subsidy for its Latin American newswire operations. (EFE, despite its denials, took no action, legal or otherwise, against the *Post*.)

It is impossible to easily categorize Professor Kim's writing style, as it frequently shifts from scholarly to anecdotal to reportorial. And occasionally, he comments on tangential issues, as in the following passage:

"Journalists are a proud and to a degree egocentric intellectual lot. Their profession is not highly rewarding monetarily. They are occasionally compensated for the honest poverty by usually ceremonial peer recognition in the form of awards." (p. 159)

On the face of it, *EFE* might seem to be little more than an obscure history of a usually ignored news agency. That the book is much more than this — that it is enjoyable and of interest — is a tribute to Professor Kim, a brand of writer in the journalist/scholar mold of Syracuse University journalism professor and former UPI Madrid bureau chief Henry F. Schulte. Like Dr. Schulte's *The Spanish Press, 1470-1966*, which helped set the standard for readable, English-language histories of international press systems, Professor Kim's *EFE* deserves a wide readership from journalists, historians, and media scholars alike.

Marcia Landy. *British Genres: Cinema and Society, 1930-1960*. Princeton University Press, 1991. 553 pp. $65.00 Cloth; $19.95 Paper. Reviewed by Steven Phipps, University of Missouri at St. Louis

Landy's book attempts to look at the history of British cinema in a more comprehensive and balanced manner than has been achieved by earlier studies. Perhaps the chief value of the book is in its presentation of not only a workable taxonomic structure, but detailed specific examples of various categories of British films during the period studied.

The author groups British productions into several well-defined categories, such as "Empire, War, and Espionage Films," "The Woman's Film," and "The Social Problem Film." Within each of these categories, Landy provides us with ample supporting examples: specific films, with their relevant attributes vividly

described. One possible weakness of the book, however, is that it seems easy for the reader to miss the significant points of each chapter while wading through the morass of detailed examples.

The book's introduction hints at the need for providing a newly defined theoretical overview of British cinema that takes into account all genres and all relevant cultural factors, but somehow this is never really achieved. The epilogue, a mere four pages, leaves us with a sorely lacking analytical conclusion. The author does, however, leave us with a few significant, although tersely phrased, summary observations. The author's primary point here is that the study of British cinema through the perspective of genre studies offers the most insight into the medium. Landy seems to feel that further studies in the British film should utilize this perspective rather than that of the realist aesthetic.

Perhaps an even more worthwhile approach would be to structure a comprehensive study of the British cinema within the framework of realist historiography (not to be confused with the realist aesthetic), which would focus on the interactions between film history and its generative mechanisms. This approach is discussed by Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery in *Film History: Theory and Practice* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1985).

Landy does attempt to discredit a couple widely held views regarding the British film of the period 1830-1860: That the British film was too heavily dependent on the novel and the theater, and that British films tended to be dull and uninteresting. She also suggests that previous studies have tended to analyze British film inaccurately by assuming that only those films that focus on a "lifelike" realism are worth examination.

The author occasionally addresses the relationship between British and American cinema (and the general view that the British industry has been subservient to the American industry), but this discussion is not very highly developed. Landy does, however, adequately support her contention that the British cinema industry during the period 1830-1860 was both viable and significant.

An extensive bibliography is provided, in addition to 24 black and white plates of stills from various films.

Michele Martin. *"HELLO, CENTRAL?" Gender, Technology, and Culture in the Formation of Telephone Systems*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991. 219 pp. Reviewed by Linda Steiner, Rutgers University

Researching the work and lives of twentieth century individuals and institutions can be hampered by the considerable extent to which telephone technology obviates the need for written documents. But if telephones erase much of the evidence of their ordinary use in business and social life (and, as the phone logs of now Associate Justice Clarence Thomas attest, even this erasure is not complete), the archives for the technology itself are provocative, as a dozen or so communications historians have demonstrated, especially since, or perhaps inspired by, essays in *The Social Impact of the Telephone*, edited in 1977 by Ithiel de Sola Pool. Michele Martin's "Hello Central," considerably enriches the telephony literature with a complex, detailed account of the development of the Canadian telephone system from the 1870s to the 1920s.

Martin refutes more reductive unidirectional explanations of telephony by taking seriously the evolving interactions of gender, technology, culture, class, and

political economy. Extensively quoting formal reports and documents as well as confidential letters and managers' diaries held in Bell Canada archives in Montreal, Martin shows that Bell officials intended to provide a particular kind of service for a particular kind of people. As successful as they ultimately were in building a profitable monopoly, in training an efficient work force and in convincing subscribers to rely on telephone technology, their efforts were mediated in ways not anticipated.

The telephone was originally assumed to be a technology of and for men, a useful tool for a male elite, especially businessmen, that would financially profit men. It was even to be "operated" by men; only the wild, if not rude, hijinx of the 16-17 year old boys first hired as operators convinced telephone company officials that women should be employed. In any case, much of the scholarship on the telephone correctly recognizes its gendered nature and acknowledges gender differences in how people both use the telephone and are affected by it. What Martin persuasively challenges, however, is an assumption, often made explicit, that women were passive recipients, or even victims, of the new technology. Martin emphasizes instead women's active and significant, albeit unplanned, impact on the development of the telephone system. First, the women operators hired to replace those incorrigible boys also opposed company control and protocol, thereby transforming the labor process. They resisted at the individual level, by making personal calls, by listening to conversations, and by retaliating against nasty customers. Canadian women also worked collectively, organizing as early as 1894 and in 1907 going on strike. Second, by the early 1900s middle-class homemakers had ignored company plans for "male tenure" (Cockburn's term) and used the telephone for their own domestic and social purposes. Women cannot be globalized here; Martin is mindful of class differences. Moreover, certain diverse and imaginative uses of the telephone — for concerts, sermons, and readings, for example — were eliminated when they did not accommodate the company's political or profit motives. Nonetheless, women's exploitation of the technology forced Bell Telephone to alter its development strategy, reorient its marketing plans, and legitimize the emerging female telephone culture.

One of Martin's most interesting chapters describes Bell's efforts, intensified once it succeeded in mechanizing and depersonalizing operator contact with subscribers, to produce a particular kind of telephone operator "voice." The concern was not only to standardize the voice in form and content, but also to make it a specifically genteel upper-middle-class voice. Regardless of those romance stories about true love inspired by hearing the voice of an operator, I wonder whether this also is a disembodiment, representing attempts to "objectify" and desexualize women. (Customers, too, had to be taught to use telephones properly, although they did not always want to learn, and often refused to do so.)

Indeed, my quibbles with Martin's analyses generally involve the issue of sex. For example, I think she underestimates the specific impact of the verbally aggressive obscene phone call. On this Martin merely says, "The only contribution of the telephone was to facilitate, through the anonymity it afforded, the emergence of unpleasant characteristics which already existed" (p.159). Furthermore, I suspect Martin chose to take as paradigmatic of the telephone's impact on "mixed relationships" the half-dressed flapper calling her boyfriend, rather than the schoolgirl anxiously waiting for the phone to ring, simply because she wants to present women as active.

Martin, an assistant professor at the Universite du Quebec, apparently did little to restrain the stubbornly awkward language and organization of her dissertation, written for the University of Toronto. It's also worth saying that, having interspersed several passing references to the United States, Martin never indicates how much of her story applies to cultures outside Canada; presumably she believes that, historically, gender and class matter more than nationality. But apart from some sections that are dense with statistics about a couple of Canadian cities almost on a ward-by-ward basis, this book merits close attention from scholars interested in telephony and the development of a telephone culture, or in the intersections of communications technology, gender and social structure more generally.

Wayne Parsons. *The Power of the Financial Press: Journalism and Economic Opinion in Britain and America.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989. 230 pp. Bibliography. Index. $24.95 Cloth. Reviewed by Louis Liebovich, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Parsons, a senior lecturer in government and director of the Public Research Unit at Queen Mary College, University of London, states that his purpose in this book is to examine how the financial press in Great Britain and the United States has functioned in providing the "intersection" between the private, financial sector and government (though he never explains WHY he chose Great Britain and the United States). Not surprisingly, he is far more incisive in his examination of Great Britain's press than U.S. media and much more astute in his observations about economic theory and government than newspaper financial reporting. This is not a book about the financial press, nor is it particularly historical. Rather, it is a discussion of how U.S. and British newspapers and magazines reacted to the "Keynesian revolution" and to free market advocates of the 1980s.

Business and economic news is a burgeoning industry in the United States, one of the few areas where daily newspapers are spending more money on coverage. Why this is occurring and how it evolved over the years is an important topic, but this book hardly recognizes this.

Someone someday will write a thorough, revealing book about the U.S. financial press, or about the British financial press. This book does neither.

Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr. *Alex Posey: Creek Poet, Journalist, and Humorist.* University of Nebraska Press, 1992. 330 pp. $39.95 Cloth. Reviewed by John M. Coward, University of Tulsa

Alex Posey was perhaps the brightest Native American writer of his day. His romantic poetry, journalism and humorous political commentaries were widely read and praised in the early years of the century. When Posey died in 1908 — swept away by a flood-swollen river at only 34 — he had earned a literary reputation well beyond the boundaries of Indian Territory.

What makes Posey's life significant and compelling today is its cultural complexity. As portrayed by Daniel Littlefield, a professor of English at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Posey was a gifted writer caught between two very different worlds. Posey was a Creek, born in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) in 1873 and heir to the rich culture and traditions of his people. He was

also an educated and progressive editor, businessman and bureaucrat, fully attuned to the ways of politics and commerce. The tensions between these two poles animated Posey's life and illustrate the cultural dilemma faced by many native people then — and now.

Posey's greatest creation was Fus Fixico, a fictitious Creek full-blood whose letters to his own *Indian Journal* offered a running commentary on life in Indian Territory. Using Fixico and his friends, Posey wrote in a full-blood dialect to poke fun at government officials and criticize Creek politicians in the final, troubled years of the Creek Nation. In the letters, Tams Bixby, controversial chairman of the Dawes Commission, became "Dam Big Pie," and Interior Secretary Ethan Hitchcock became "Secretary It's Cocked." When Creek Chief Pleasant Porter failed to deliver allotment deeds to tribal members, Posey's characters satirized his inaction: "Well, one thing I like to know is if Porter was quit trying to issue them deeds. I guess maybe so he was had so many deeds to sign up he was just give out of breath and quit. I think the Creek council ought to elect some white man to fix them up for us anyhow. It's too much work for one Injin."

In Fus Fixico, Posey had found his editorial voice. By 1903, Littlefield notes, Posey's characters were compared to Uncle Remus and other dialect voices. Articles about Posey and his work appeared in Boston and New York papers. One account referred to Posey as "the William Allen White of Indian Territory" and the *Kansas City Times* called Fus Fixico "the Dooley of Indian Territory politics." Posey was on the verge of a national literary career, a goal he chose not to pursue. "I fear that eastern people would not understand me," he told a fellow editor. Despite Posey's misgivings, Littlefield writes, the Fus Fixico letters were an effective combination of style and subject matter "presented in the language and cadence of one deeply concerned." The letters were, in short, Posey's most effective critique of the dilemma facing the Creeks in a rapidly changing — and increasingly alien — modern world.

Littlefield carefully positions Posey's life and work within the larger history of the Indian Territory, land long sought by white settlers and fortune hunters. By the 1890s, tribal leaders could see that political changes were coming whether they liked it or not. Posey grew up in this shifting political climate and became a leading spokesman for his side, the Progressives. Posey believed that the only hope for his people was to give up the old customs and tribal structure for the new world of U.S. citizenship, individual ownership of land, a cash economy and party politics.

Posey's own life was testimony to the benefits of his choice. He was educated at Bacone Indian University near Muskogee where he developed a love of literature. Moreover, he had a natural ability with words and he spoke both Creek and English skillfully, a talent that allowed him to serve as a school administrator and newspaper editor and publisher. It was his linguistic skill, in fact, that gave Posey a new appreciation for the traditional ways. In 1904, Posey put aside journalism to work for the Dawes Commission. His task was to travel the Creek back country, enrolling conservative Creeks, called Snakes, who had failed to claim their land allotments. This contact with the Snakes caused Posey to rethink his progressive stance. "In his search for the 'lost' Creeks," Littlefield writes, "Alex had everywhere seen evidence of the negative effects of economic development: the ragweed where the prairie sod had been broken. the frame

shacks with siderooms that renters had put up on Indian allotments; the riffraff that came into the Creek Nation and congregated in new towns, looking for opportunities to make their fortunes."

Although it is impossible to know how Posey's views might have evolved had he lived, Littlefield points out that "progress" did not serve the Creeks well. Speculators and white land companies soon took over many Creek allotments, leaving the natives with money in their pockets but without their land or the skills to live satisfactorily in town. Even the old Posey ranch near Eufaula, Oklahoma, was soon lost.

Despite this legacy, Littlefield makes a strong case that Posey's life and work remain important, not least because of Posey's own struggle to survive in the age of "multiplicity." Armed with an observant eye, a keen sense of humor, and a talent to communicate both to his people and beyond, Alex Posey transcended his place and time. This book, along with James Parins' *John Rollin Ridge*, is a significant biography because it demonstrates the complex duality of Native American journalists. It is notable too that both books are from the University of Nebraska Press, which deserves credit for recovering some significant lives in American journalism.

Brigitte Lebens Nacos. *The Press, Presidents, and Crises*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. 190 pp. Notes. Index. Cloth. Reviewed by Craig Allen, Arizona State University

At the outbreak of the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy conveyed his fears by telling associates he was finally about to "earn his paycheck" as chief executive, a remark not far-fetched in a nuclear age when presidents are seldom elected without thought cast on their capabilities during emergencies. Yet as Kennedy learned in 1962, even perilous events do not require push-button response but evolve instead in anxious phases that give the news media time to make and promote judgments. Given latitude for criticizing government otherwise, do journalists hamstring policy-makers at these critical moments? From a three-newspaper content study of six recent crises, Columbia University political scientist Brigitte Lebens Nacos produces a stimulating "no" answer, revealing that journalists, inclined to reflect diverse sentiment before and after crises, unify and "rally 'round the flag" at their most acute stages. Moreover, this did not change despite a sharpening of press-presidential swords in 1968-1974.

The "rally 'round the flag" thesis is not new, but it has seldom been advanced with this book's ample historical perspective on White House media relations. The six crises — Cuba, the Dominican invasion, the Detroit riots, Three Mile Island, the Reagan assassination attempt and Grenada — have meaningful media dimensions and historians drawn to any one of them will profit from Nacos' primary-source interpretations.

Yet media historians who do not like numbers and compartmentalized studies may find this book a chore and they should be advised it does not represent the best in quantitative research. Reliability is the book's primary difficulty because every part of the content analysis, some 3,500 items, was apparently handled by the author alone. Given this impressively huge but cumbersome data base, one solution could have been assignment of samples of items to other coders for reliability correlations. The reader will likewise find no statistical testing, nor proc-

essing, on what seem an endless number of little three-by-three tables.

Except for quantitative snags, the book is carefully considered. Nacos does not jump feet-first into the notion that journalists and presidents started to confront one another only in the Nixon era and alludes that adversarial spirit depends on personalities more than underlying trends. It would have been helpful to have seen analysis of at least one of the Nixon crises, avoided by intent for pre and post tests around a 1968-1974 "watershed" of press-presidential polarization. This "watershed," despite secondary-source backing, lingers as a sort of black hole. The Yom Kippur War, for example, could have been extremely illuminating, resembling as it did the book's six other crises but hitting Nixon amid the Watergate hostilities.

Nacos makes a worthy contribution, though, by confining her work to "serious and middle level" crises of short duration that are usually foisted upon a president. With the media second-guessing of the long-duration and policy-driven Vietnam, Watergate and Iran crises in separate categories, she ably corrects a common belief that the press is always out to get the president. Although today's soothing armistice in the Cold War dampens the premise that grim national emergencies "represent the most fateful and crucial times for the nation and its presidents," Nacos shows why crises are indeed pivotal episodes, equally fateful and crucial to institutions that must cover them.

James McEnteer. *Fighting Words: Independent Journalists in Texas*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992. 222 pp. $21.95 Cloth. Reviewed by William E. Huntzicker, Bemidji State University

James McEnteer's book provides biographical highlights of five alternative Texas journalists, ranging from editor William Brann of the 1890s to counterculture writer Stoney Burns of the 1960s. The five shared a distaste for their state's political establishment, and they attacked the bland "objective" journalism of its major newspapers.

McEnteer presents the men chronologically, beginning with Waco editor Brann, whose career ended with three bullets in the back on April 1, 1898. The assassin was the father of a female student at Baylor University; the campus and the Baptist church were Brann's favorite targets. "Brann's real enemy," McEnteer writes, "was the illiberal mind, though he himself was an unregenerate racist, had his own quack remedy for the economy, and was burdened with a Victorian ambivalence about women complicated by the suicide of his daughter." (pp. 1-3) Brann's *Iconoclast*, begun in 1891, became an icon for subsequent anti-establishment journalists because of his attacks on privilege and his lament of the industrial revolution.

Don Hampton Biggers, an independent journalist, raked through the Texas oil industry's muck. In 1890 he purchased his own weekly newspaper, the *Midland Gazette*, which went broke within the decade. In 1921 he started *Independent Oil News and Financial Reporter*, focusing entirely on the oil industry. To ensure his independence, he refused ads; oil promoters could become subjects of his fraud investigations. Biggers, who drew his own editorial cartoons, said "newspaper toadyism is the lowest depths of degradation to which a human being can descend." He died in 1957.

John Granberry founded the monthly *Emancipator* in 1938 after being pres-

sured from the ministry and two academic positions for his heretical religious and political views. Granberry fought censorship, bigotry, xenophobia, and racism. He was an outspoken critic of child labor and his 1909 doctoral dissertation on the New Testament became a textbook for several years at the University of Chicago. Disturbed by the chaos of 1938, Granbery, who spoke at least nine languages, entered journalism to promote worldwide understanding; he fought anti-Communism. Granbery died in 1953, believing that corporate and chain journalism had already destroyed press freedom.

Archer Fullinghim published the weekly *Kountze News* from 1950 to 1974 in the East Texas town of Kountze. "With equal vehemence," McEnteer writes, "The Printer might indict American foreign policy or the cooking at a Kountze cafe. Regular readers learned that Fullinghim loved poke salad, Elvis Presley, and the environment, but hated the John Birch Society, the phone company, and the *Beaumont Enterprise*." (p. 103). Beginning as a racist, Fullingim underwent a transformation, describing his feelings in print and trying to convince his readers of the need for racial equality. This small-town editor idolized President Kennedy and consistently attacked Dallas a hotbed of hate. He retired in 1974 and died ten years later.

Stoney Burns, whose career as an underground journalist lasted only six years, retired from the field in 1973 at the age of 30. Burns' newspaper began as *Notes from the Underground* at Southern Methodist University as an alternative students newspaper and became *Dallas Notes* and then the *Iconoclast*. Brann might recognize the attitude, but certainly not the language of the newer *Iconoclast* with its four-letter words and routine references to Dallas policemen as pigs. Burns, who was born Brent LaSalle Stein, was busted for possessing marijuana. McEnteer speculates that Burns, who had been the subject of police harassment for his outspoken newspaper, knew better than to have grass in his possession. He had previously been accused of pornography on the basis of his newspaper's language and of selling without a license for hawking his newspaper in a shopping mall.

Although very different in attitude and time, these rebellious journalists were united by race and gender. McEnteer agrees that they represent only a few of the dissenting journalists in Texas history. "Writing in German, Spanish, and English, men and women, black, white, and brown, have joined the ongoing struggle for democracy on which a free society depends, often in trying circumstances. Other books can and should be written about these individuals." (p. xiii). Why not reflect that diversity here?

Some of the editors were racist; others took great risk to stand against the Ku Klux Klan and influential Texas anti-Communists. In this book, McEnteer provides a straightforward, but revealing, look at the history of both Texas and journalism.

Donald A. Richie. *Press Gallery: Congress and the Washington Correspondents.* Harvard University Press, 1991. 293 pp. $29.95 Cloth. Reviewed by Hubert W. Ellingsworth, University of Tulsa

At a time of grave uncertainty in American society about the interaction of mass media reporting and the operation of the political process, Donald A. Richie has provided a thoughtful, well-researched and very readable account of Congressional

journalism from the First Congress in 1789 to the coming of radio broadcasts in the 1930'.

The author, currently Associate Historian of the United States Senate Historical Office, employs a chronological narrative spanning 150 years of the House and Senate press galleries. But the richness of the book comes from well-placed biographical sketches and anecdotes of both journalists and Congressmen. If Richie had done nothing more, this book would be a rewarding read, but he also inserts discussions of ethics (both journalistic and political), censorship and First Amendment interpretations, confidentiality of sources and conflict of interest that are as current today as in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. Readers seeking an evolutionary pattern in such issues will find more evidence of fluctuations than of trends. But it is clear that Congress is far more open to press scrutiny than in the past. Richie tells us of the first

tense days of the Republic when the Representatives, having just approved the First Amendment, debated heatedly the presence of reporters on the House floor and then banished them to what came to be called the press gallery. The Federalist-dominated Senate was more distrustful still and barred reporters altogether until a gallery was constructed for them in 1794 to be used only during legislative debates. Senate discussion of treaties and confirmations remained closed until the Twentieth Century.

After a troubled and mutually distrustful beginning, Congress and the press began to see the advantages of getting along and there occurred a kind of merger that gave rise to semiofficial newspapers, *The National Intelligencer*, *The Federalist*, and later *The Congressional Globe*, which summarized proceedings and transcribed important speeches. These were used as sources of Congressional news by papers around the country. The *Intelligencer* allowed Congressmen to edit their remarks before publication, a precedent continued by the *Congressional Record* when it was begun in 1873.

Richie sees pre-radio Congressional journalism as falling into two eras. The first was mostly a managed press; the second began around 1850 when a new wave of out-of-town journalists spearheaded by Horace Greeley established themselves in Washington and began to cover Congress as a source of news that went beyond accounts of proceedings. This approach was facilitated by the burgeoning telegraph service, which provided almost instant contact between the Washington reporters and editors in distant cities. Because the telegraph was expensive and was priced by the word, the stories were delivered in a crisp and terse reporting style that became the standard for newspaper writing. In this new environment, Congress could no longer manage what the press gallery said about it, though its inclination to complain about the press was undiminished.

If the earlier years at times represented a kind of waived conflict of interest between press and legislature, Richie tells of how the matter returns in a new form with the postwar burgeoning of lobbies. Some reporters, poorly paid then as now, worked both for newspapers and as lobbyists, especially for investment schemes and railroads. Scandals involving these early double-dippers led to the passage of strong new regulations on the press gallery, including the accreditation of reporters.

While *Press Gallery* is mostly a story about men, Richie devotes a chapter to Emily Briggs and other women reporters who attempted with little success to establish themselves as purveyors of more than society columns. Denied seats in

the press gallery, limited by their editors to soft-news assignments, and outside the supportive network of their male counterparts, some of the women reporters researched and wrote news stories that they sold to male journalists.

Historians of journalism will find Richie's extensive Notes section and thorough indexing useful in any work involving this period, and the photographs and engravings are admirably chosen. A regrettably brief Afterword bridges the period from 1932 to the 1980s. Overall, this book is an important contribution to the understanding of both Congressional operations and American journalism.

Colin Seymour-Ure. *The British Press and Broadcasting Since 1945*. Basil Blackwell. 1991. 269 pp. $29.95 Cloth; $8.95 Paper. Reviewed by J. O. Baylen (Emeritus), Eastbourne, England

The major purpose of this study is to describe and analyze "the revolution that has occurred in the British media over the last forty-five years..." in which "television and other new outlets have started up and radio and the printed media have changed beyond recognition..." (xi) More specifically, asserts Seymour-Ure, the book is "mainly about the press and broadcasting — who controlled them, what was available and how they related to one another in the years 1945-90..."(xii) And, while the scope of the subject makes the study "necessarily selective and impressionistic...," its general focus is on "the theme of media accountability...between media and government...[and]...who is accountable to whom." (xii) Thus, beginning with an overview and comparison of the media between 1945 and 1990, the ensuing nine chapters deal with developments in the Press, Radio, and Television during the four and a half decades since 1945; the "Concentration, Conglomeration, and Internationalism" of the media; the "Content and Audiences" of the media; the "Media, Government and Politics" with special attention to the "Intrusion of Television" and the roles of the Prime Minister and political parties; and, finally, "Media Accountability" with emphasis on government policy making, "Markets, Self-Regulation and the Law." To this reviewer, two of the most interesting and revealing topics on this well crafted study are the keen survey and analysis of how the British media changed between 1945 and 1990 and the problem of the Official Secrets Act of 1911 for the media since World War II.

In 1945, there was no television in Britain and only 10,000,000 households had a radio set, for which they paid an annual license fee of 10 shillings (50p) to maintain the British Broadcasting corporation (BBC). There were only two BBC radio stations — one "serious" and one broadcasting light music and entertainment — with the nine o'clock evening news (as during the war) a very popular program. Most people read one of the nine London "national" morning newspapers, which comprised the lower circulation "qualities" and the mass circulation "populars" and averaged from four to eight pages and provided news and very few features. Londoners also had a choice of three evening papers; more people read a Sunday than a daily paper; and almost 750 towns had weekly papers. All of the nine national dailies were owned by such press barons as Lord Beaverbrook, Lord Kemsley, and Lord Rothermere (all very pro-Tory party) who also owned the Sunday papers and some chains of provincial dailies. Highly partisan, these papers were much involved in the election campaigns, while the BBC provided equal time for reviewing talks by the leaders of all parties. In addition to the

daily papers, there were several illustrated news and feature magazines (with a bonanza for women's periodicals). In book publishing and marketing there were the popular orange and green paperbacks and the W. H. Smith Booksellers and the Boots chain offering low-priced circulating libraries. The cinema was very popular — 30,000,000 attendance per week in 1945 — offering brief "newsreels," full length (mostly Hollywood) feature films, and usually a short low budget "B grade" movie. All films were censored "for decency" by local authorities, guided by an independent national board of review or censors.

In 1990, television was all persuasive — three of the five homes had two television sets and one person in three possessed three sets. Television viewers had a choice of four channels — BBC 1, BBC 2, ITV, and Channel 4 — providing 450 hours of programs per week. While the BBC channels depend largely on the annual license fee (now risen to 71 pounds) to finance its operations, ITV and Channel 4 are financed by advertisements (closely regulated by the independent Broadcasting Authority) and Cable TV by subscription. Nearly every household old now had color television and more than half possessed video recorders. People spent approximately twenty-six hours a week viewing television with special attention to news programs, "soap operas," films, various panel discussions, and sports (particularly snooker and football). Only eight hours per week were devoted to radio listening provided by four BBC national and thirty-two local stations and at least one commercial and several foreign stations. Most radio stations offer music and chat programs with BBC Radio 4 providing news and special features and Radio 3, classical music. 85% of the cars now have radios and over 25% of the households have four or more radio sets. Despite the greatly increased use of the radio and TV, people still read a daily (mostly national) newspaper. Of the eleven national dailies, six are tabloids that claim 80% of the circulation. Most papers average 30-40 pages, a large part of which are features and small ads. The Sunday papers are produced in sections and provide (as do some Saturday issues) an illustrated weekly magazine. But fewer people read the evening papers and even less read the provincial papers (of which only eighteen morning papers survived by 1990). The national dailies are now owned by eight ownership groups (headed by Rupert Murdoch, Lord Rothermere, and the late Robert Maxwell) that also control international multi-media organizations (TV, radio, film, video, book and magazine publishing). There are now over 700 magazines available, offering categories (including soft porn) not available in 1945. In book publishing, paperbacks virtually dominate and, in spite of the disappearance of commercial lending libraries, more then 55,000 new titles and reprints were produced in 1990. Except for the young and the middle class, few people go the cinema and attendance hardly exceeds 1,000,000 a week. Film censorship is much more relaxed and liberal than in 1945.

Actually, the Official Secrets Act of 1911 did not much trouble the news media until defense policy and the Committee on Nuclear Disarmament became contentious issues during the early 1960'. Journalists became reluctant to tolerate government secrecy because they often suspected that the government was using the Act more to conceal its mistakes and failures than to safeguard national security. Thus a series of court proceedings initiated by the government against alleged abuses of the law evoked demands in Parliament and the media for the abolition of the Act that finally moved the government to amend the law in 1989. But this change — which reduced the range of official secrecy offenses and

put the onus on the government to prove that unauthorized disclosures threatened national security — is still deemed unsatisfactory by the media and libertarians who demand a Freedom of Information Act similar to that in the U.S.A. To the media, the amended Official Secrets Act and the existing libel, contempt, and obscene publications laws remain unduly restrictive and obviate a truly free press and television news coverage.

The lucid narrative and sensible commentary, augmented by an array of informative charts and tables and a first-rate bibliography, render this study a most important source on the history and state of the British press and media during the past half-century.

Marian Shaw. *World's Fair Notes: A Woman Journalist Views Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition*. Pogo Press, 1992. 108 pp. $12.95. Reviewed by June Adamson, University of Tennessee

The original *MS* magazine carried a regular feature about "Found Women." Happily, journalism historian are today continually finding women who have made contributions to the field. Marian Shaw is found in a recent book entitled *World's Fair Notes: A Woman Journalist Views Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition*.

Shaw's articles are hardly "notes," but detailed, rather lengthy descriptions of the sights, sounds, and smells written in what is Victorian literary journalism style. The dozen Shaw articles certainly give a vivid picture of the Chicago Exposition offerings: the world and all the people in it as seen through her eyes. Shaw was special correspondent for the *Argus*, an obscure Fargo, North Dakota, newspaper.

The preface cites the contributions made by 19th-century women journalists despite overwhelming difficulties and shows the later difficulties faced by such women as its writer, Georgie Anne Geyer, a Chicago-born foreign correspondent, still well known for her insights on happenings abroad through her syndicated column.

Publisher Leo Harris's explanation of how the Shaw articles came to light and the difficulty of learning about her life and work is also enlightening. So is the analysis of "Women and the Press at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition" by Ann E. Feldman, a cultural historian and World's Fair scholar, at the end of the book.

But the author, by definition, is Marian Shaw whose powers of observation clearly were sharp. Her work is indeed a "pen portrayal" worthy even of today's literary journalism label. She is *there* and takes readers along with her. Shaw does more *showing* than telling, as she presents article by article descriptions of displays from virtually every county, every state, every industry, and every interest of the period.

That Marian Shaw "knows her stuff" is evident on every page. Many literary and historical references are included. Her work marks her as an educated woman. She could not have described all she does, especially in artistic exhibits, without having read, and perhaps traveled, widely. She is equally at home in her excellent use of rhetorical devices such as alliteration. Even onomatopoeia is found in her description of those "who doing the fair simply because it is the 'pwawpah' thing."

Although her description of state by state exhibits weighs a little heavily toward the Dakotas, Minnesota, and the mid-west, probably because of the location of her newspaper, she is generally balanced in her reporting, giving attention to all states in some detail. And she goes beyond statehood to describe such things as the bronze statue of Brigham Young as the "patron saint of Utah," which remained a territory until 1896. Obviously, anything she did not know before she has looked up. A reader, especially a journalist, can only imagine the hours and hours she must have spent observing and collecting material, studying, then writing, and undoubtedly paid very little for her remarkable effort.

Apparently she entered the Fair by way of the back door, or rather "The Midway." Here she suggests that because of bad smells "it would be well for all visitors to this primitive encampment to follow the example of the Cossacks when they attacked the garlic-eating French battalion — stop their nostrils with clay."

This little book is an admirable effort not only because what it adds to knowledge of women who were pioneers in journalism, but because of the information it contains. Pictures of the Fair drawn from many sources add to it.

Daniel W. Pfaff. *Joseph Pulitzer II and the Post-Dispatch: A Newspaperman's Life*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991. 455 pp. $29.95 Cloth. Reviewed by Ted C. Smythe, California State University, Fullerton (emeritus)

One of the major publishers of American journalism now has a biography that illuminates not only his life and that of his paper but also that of his illustrious father, Joseph Pulitzer, Sr.

Daniel W. Pfaff has tapped personal correspondence of Joseph Pulitzer II (who later simplified his name to Joseph Pulitzer with *his son* Joseph Pulitzer III called Joseph Pulitzer, Jr.) and conducted numerous interviews to weave a richly textured, though sometimes uneven, biography of the man who saved the Pulitzer name in journalism.

This was the son who generally was considered least competent among the Pulitzer brothers. Pfaff addresses this issue and shows how Joseph (as I'll distinguish him here) once had his father's confidence but lost it partly because he was independent and forced his father's hand. Pfaff develops the split between father and son through extensive quotations from letters and reports the son had to write to his father after meetings between the two. When Pulitzer changed his will in 1909, Joseph's share of the corporation dropped from 60 percent to 10 percent; Herbert's (the youngest brother) rose from 20 percent to 60 percent; Ralph's (the oldest brother) remained the same. Herbert, untested, was the hope of the future.

Pfaff shows that Joseph's desire to stay in St. Louis and run the *Post-Dispatch* contributed to his loss of standing in his father's opinion. Pulitzer thought of the *Post-Dispatch* as a money cow and of St. Louis as no longer worthy of his presence. That Joseph had no greater desire than to run the St. Louis paper rankled the father's sensibilities.

Pfaff is at his strongest in the first part of the book, where he shows a free-spirited Joseph who could append the following note to a letter from his father criticizing brother Ralph's diaries:

One cold day and one rainy day have kept the great mogul indoors most of the

> time. Hence this belly-aching tone! He apparently doesn't want to be told anything unless it is that Hearst, Brisbane, Carvalho and Goddard [all of the *Journal*] have all jumped into the river, that no one in N.Y. is reading anything except the morning, Sunday and evening *World*, and that the price of white paper has dropped to nothing. Anything else he considers unnecessary and as indicating a particular desire on everyone's part to hound him down. (p. 90.)

Any reader of Pfaff's book will tend to agree with Joseph's sardonic tone.

It is after Pulitzer II gains control of the *Post-Dispatch* that the book loses some of its flavor and Joseph becomes a thoroughly conventional liberal publisher. This is partly because the correspondence tends to reflect his desire to criticize by indirection, thus, perhaps, avoiding confrontation. He had been the recipient of so many harsh comments in his young life that he must have rejected that as a means of control of others. He noticed that even his father, who relied upon his minions for the success of his papers, treated his editors and managers with some respect, even creating titles to console them.

Joseph's role in shaping the *Post-Dispatch* seems to be greater than that of Adolph Ochs and the *New York Times,* yet the two publishers were similar in that they led by choosing effective editors and managers and largely allowing them the freedom they needed to develop superior news gathering and editorial machines. The Pulitzer-O.K. Bovard relationship is a clear example of this. Pulitzer's interests eventually settled on the editorial page of the paper, and there he had less success. He went through a series of editors until finally finding someone who shared his views or was willing to acquiesce to them at strategic moments.

Pfaff provides important details on the decline and sale of the *New York World* and of Joseph's role.

This is a biography and, as a result, there is attention to personal details that provide the human side of a very active and generally unPulitzer-like son. Pfaff provides illuminating insights into the man, such as the time his son Michael, when about 10 years old, asked his father to bat the ball he pitched. Since Pulitzer had no depth perception — he was blind in one eye and could see only partially out of the other — it was impossible for him to hit the ball. When he missed several times, Michael reportedly said: "Hey, you're not very good at this, are you?" "No, I guess I'm not very good at it," Pulitzer replied. Unlike *his* father, he didn't want his family pitying his visual handicap.

One may wish for more of a history of the paper itself, but Pfaff provides sufficient context to understand the paper's contributions through editorials and news coverage. The business side of the paper — despite Pulitzer's understanding of that side — receives less attention, although important financial statistics are provided.

The last half of the book is organized by topics or eras — World War II, Joys and Sorrows, Reds and Rights, among others, as Pfaff tries to get a handle on important themes affecting the *Post-Dispatch* and on Pulitzer's role in addressing those themes. It is probably the best one can do, but the shifting back and forth in time, events and personnel is hard to follow. Pfaff does add little phrases that help the reader to identify someone who appeared earlier in the text. This is skillfully done.

Pfaff deserves credit for producing a biography that will become the standard

treatment of this important figure. Joseph Pulitzer II is given the treatment he deserves — high praise, because he was a major publisher with enormous influence on St. Louis and on liberal American journalism, if not American journalism historians. This book should help to redress the imbalance that now appears in survey histories.

Unfinished Business: Twenty Years of Socialist Review. Edited by the Socialist Review Collectives. Routledge, Chapman, and Hall (dist. for Verso bks.), 1992. 340 pp. $59.95 Cloth; $17.95 Paper. Reviewed by Jon Bekken, Suffolk University

Socialist Review, known as *Socialist Revolution* for its first several years, has sought to bridge the gap between socialist activists and academics for the past twenty years. As their initially revolutionary hopes faded in the 1970s, *Socialist Review* reoriented itself towards a more evolutionary perspective and an increasingly academic audience. The contours of that transition are set forth in a useful, if too brief, 10-page introduction, which also helps to situate the journal within broader debates within the U. S. left. Today *Socialist Review* seeks to connect social movements and their struggles to the socialist project, and to develop a socialist vision "appropriate to a new era of 'posts': postmodern, post-Fordist, post-Stalinist." (p. 9).

This volume is less a chronicle of *Socialist Review*'s first twenty years than a statement of where it stands today. Only two articles (out of 20) are drawn from its first ten years (and none from the six years before the change of name), while half were originally published between 1985 and 1988.

The articles were clearly chosen less for how what they tell us about the times in which they were written than for how they speak to contemporary concerns. The books is divided into four sections: Back to the Drawing Board (re-examining Marxism and feminism), Architectures of Power (nuclear war, perestroika, French socialism, international debt), Reassembling Political Identities (factory closings, community organizing, race, post-feminism), and Unfinished Business (Marxist theory, neo-liberalism, the American left).

Most have been abridged, revised and (sometimes) updated — not only to trim dated references and unnecessary verbiage, but also in ways that subtly shift the style, and sometimes the politics, away from the original texts. The Acknowledgments concede that this process may have caused "some loss of nuance or qualification," as well as the wholesale elimination of source notes and documentation from several articles (page ix).

Historians would do well to remember that caveat. More than 20 entire paragraphs (and 10 of 16 notes) were cut from Stanley Aronowitz's "Socialism and Beyond" (itself but half of a two-part series). While the editing is deftly handled, Aronowitz's discussion of then-contemporary socialist currents and social conditions is largely gone, as are his deprecatory references to "bourgeois socialism." Donna Haraway's "Manifesto for Cyborgs" has lost 21 paragraphs and seven pages of notes. Most of the articles have undergone similarly extensive editing.

I suspect that few readers will miss the deleted material, as most of the articles now read more smoothly (thought some are more formal, more academic, in tone) than did the originals. But subtle though the changes may be, they do alter our understanding of the arguments and their original context.

Of course, most readers will approach *Unfinished Business* less to study the past than to review current debates and struggles as seen by a significant current on the American left. While many articles reflect a certain malaise, all speak to important concerns in an age when it has become fashionable to celebrate privation and misery.

Jeffrey Steinbrink. *Getting To Be Mark Twain.* University of California Press, 1991. 250 pp. $22.50 Cloth. Reviewed by Michael Robertson, College of New Jersey

We all know him. The surprisingly stern face with its shock of white hair, the full mustache and bushy eyebrows, the all-white clothes. He is Mark Twain, beloved humorist and canonized great writer, the "Lincoln of our literature" as his friend Howells called him and, in his way, as central to American culture as Old Abe.

Yet as early as 1869, Bret Harte called attention to the elusiveness of Mark Twain, writing that "'Mark Twain' is a very eccentric creation of Mr. Clemens." A century later, Justin Kaplan's prize-winning biography, *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain*, brilliantly elaborated Harte's point, distinguishing Sam Clemens from his persona and alter ego Mark Twain. Now, in a biographical close reading of a crucial three-year period in Clemens's life, Jeffrey Steinbrink examines just how a lyceum-circuit lecturer and writer of humorous newspaper sketches turned himself into an immensely popular, critically acclaimed author.

Along the way, Steinbrink sheds light on a debate that has, in recent years, engaged those interested in the connections between journalism and literature. One side of the debate is best represented by Shelley Fisher Fishkin, who argues in *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism and Imaginative Writing in America* (Oxford University Press, 1985) that Clemens's newspaper experience provided both subject and style for his masterpiece *Huckleberry Finn.* Ronald Weber countered that view in a 1987 essay, "Journalism, Writing, and American Literature," claiming that journalism's influence on Twain and other writers was largely negative. According to Weber, journalists-turned-novelists "found more to resist in journalism than retain, more to work against than draw upon.

While Steinbrink is either unaware of or indifferent to this debate among journalism historians, his narrative supports Weber's position. The book opens in 1867 with thirty-two-year-old Samuel Clemens returning from a five month tour of Europe and the Middle East. Rootless since leaving home at age seventeen, Clemens had worked as a journeyman, printer, a steamboat pilot, and a prospector before becoming a reporter and humor writer for Western newspapers. By 1867, he had graduated to supplying humorous travel letters to two prestigious New York newspapers, the *Tribune* and the *Herald.* When, soon after his return from Europe, Clemens fell in love with a young woman from a staid and wealthy Eastern family, he determined that newspaper work would be his means to a prosperous respectability. With the help of his future father-in-law, he purchased a one-third interest in the *Buffalo Express* and settled in with the intention of making a career as a newspaper owner and editor.

Almost immediately after his arrival in Buffalo, his plans were disrupted when *Innocents Abroad,* an account of his European travels, became an unexpected best-seller. Freed of the need to earn a living by editorial work, Clemens grew

increasingly disenchanted with journalism. Both in personal letters and in print, he attacked newspaper journalism as vulgar. Virtually ignoring his ties to the *Express*, he began sending his work to a New York City magazine. Soon afterward, he declared that he would "write no more for any periodical. Shall simply write books." In 1871, only a year and a half after joining the *Express*, Clemens sold his interest in the paper and moved to Hartford, Connecticut, leaving journalism behind.

Steinbrink argues that with the move to Hartford and completion of his second book, *Roughing It*, Clemens definitively transformed himself from journalist to writer of books and transformed Mark Twain as well, from regional humorist to American author. Steinbrink's book offers a detailed and persuasive account of how Samuel Clemens got to be the Mark Twain we know today.

James D. Startt. *Journalists for Empire. The Imperial Debate in the Edwardian Stately Press, 1903-1913.* By Greenwood Press, 1991. 275 pp., xii. $49.95 Cloth. Reviewed by J. O. Baylen (Emeritus), Eastbourne, England

In his magisterial *Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain, Vol. II., The Twentieth Century* (1984), Stephen Koss alluded to the role of certain Edwardian editors who greatly affected "developments within, between, and beyond parliamentary groups" on important issues. James Startt has now rendered an account of the most influential of these "imperial journalists" — J. L. Garvin, John St. Loe Strachey, J. A. Spender, and *The Times* group, George E. Buckle, Charles Frederic, Moberly Bell, Valentine Chirol, Leopold Amery, and Geoffrey Robinson/Dawson. It is, asserts Startt, "a study...about political commentary" (212) on the state and future of the Empire in the British press during the 1903-13 years and "an examination of Edwardian imperil thought" as articulated by these leading journalists.

Following a succinct frame of reference in two introductory chapters — "The Edwardian Public Debate and the Press" and "The Imperial Journalists" — Startt discusses the major issues as viewed by these influential commentators in chapters dealing with Joseph Chamberlain's "Tariff Reform" campaign; "Chinese Labor in South Africa," 1903-06; "The Political Reconstruction of South Africa," 1905-14; "The Quest for Imperial Partnership," 1907-13; and a "Retrospect" (really an epilog). Of course in the background were such more basic concerns as how the nation's defense, politics, and industry could be made more efficient; the growing disparities between capital and labor; the endemic India and Irish problems, and the fact that increasingly the survival of Edwardian quality journals and papers "depended on profits, on the public appeal of their work, and...on their political preferences...." (13) All of these issues and concerns were well reflected and illuminated in the endeavors of the "imperial journalists."

Indeed, Edwardian Britain knew no greater advocate of its empire than the self-educated editor of *Outlook* and later of *The Observer*, J. L. Garvin, who distinguished himself as "one of the great cause-oriented publicists of the era..." and as a dedicated exponent of enlightened Toryism. St. Loe Strachey, the long-time editor (1898-1925) of the *Spectator*, who propounded the Whig view of the British Empire and became a staunch Liberal Unionist, came from a renowned Whig family. Like Garvin, Strachey was steadfast in the maintenance of editorial independence, but more than Garvin, his journalism was "as broad-minded and tactful

s it was definite, thorough, and steady..." (20) J. A. Spender, the well-educated and highly respected editor (1896-1921) of the *Westminster Gazette*, was like Garvin and Strachey "a writing editor." By his emphasis on gradualism "as a guiding principle for social and political change" and the application of moderate liberalism in imperial affairs, Spender made the *Westminster Gazette* "the most authoritative voice" of the Liberal party before and after its return to power in 1905-06. As Garvin was the voice of Tory imperial policy and Strachey of Liberal Unionism's imperial outlook, so Spender was "the...strongest supporter of a Liberal imperial policy to be found in the press..." Also highly respected was *The Times* senior staff — Tory oriented but devoted to maintaining the independence of their paper. George Buckle, editor of *The Times* (1884-1912), was not a "writing editor," but controlled the journal's moderate Tory stance. Moberly Bell, who served *The Times* in every staff position from 1891 until, as managing director, he dropped dead at his desk in 1911, was (as Startt states) "one of the most formidable journalists of his time." (26) A life-long Tory, he shared control of the paper's editorial policy with Buckle and a common belief in the British Empire as "a guarantor of peace" in the world. both had the support of Valentine Chirol, *The Times'* foreign editor (1899-1912), and his supreme mastery of world affairs and such able young staff as the colonial editor, Leopold Amery (1899-1910) and Geoffrey Robinson/Dawson, who later twice served as editor of *The Times* (1912-19 and 1923-41). Amery and Robinson were "disciples" of the authoritarian proconsul, Alfred Milner, and fervently espoused Milner's ideas on South Africa, imperial consolidation, and the mission of the British Empire.

All of these journalists — men of varied backgrounds and political persuasion — shared "a general perception of the Empire as a unique international entity..." (28) Startt traces their attitudes and positions as imperialists on Tariff Reform, the vexing issue of the importation and use of indentured Chinese coolie labor in South Africa, the political reconstruction of South Africa and its emergence as the Union of South Africa, and the search for a more viable and stronger imperial partnership between Britain and the autonomous overseas dominions. Although Amery was a pro-Chamberlain Tariff Reform enthusiast, Buckle and Bell — while favorable to Tariff Reform — stopped short of endorsing it. Garvin had no such hesitations; he viewed Tariff Reform as Joseph Chamberlain's attempt "to construct a policy for the Empire" upon which would hinge the industrial future of Britain. (43) Not so Strachey who became the mouthpiece of the anti-Tariff Reform Whigs and Tories and, as Startt says, "The Tariff reformers had no greater opponent in British journalism than Strachey,...a doctrinaire Free Trader..." (49) And, of course, Spender, the staunch Liberal, became "a bastion of defense for free trade and for a Free Trade Empire..."(53)

The use of indentured Chinese labor in South Africa, like Tariff Reform, became an emotional issue in political controversy. The Times staff was slow in endorsing the importation of Chinese labor and only Chirol had some misgivings about it. Nevertheless, the paper supported Alfred Milner's Chinese labor palliatives to succor the gold mining interests, as did Strachey, with some distinct reservations, in 1903. But it was not long before he joined Spender in condemning the use of indentured Asian labor. As for Garvin, in the Outlook and elsewhere he remained true to his pledge of unstinting support to Milner on the Chinese labor issue. On the political reconstruction of South Africa, almost all

of the imperial journalists were glad to put the long-standing South Africa imperial problem to rest, although they generally regretted the exclusion of Blacks, Asians, and coloreds in the political life of the new dominion. (1146, 152) Imperial problems, other than those associated with South Africa, also evoked extensive journalistic commentary during the years 1907-14. Here the concern was largely for closer cooperation with the dominions and a strong Imperial Naval Defense and the imperial journalists wrote extensively on all aspects of these problems despite their preoccupation with such serious domestic issues as Lloyd George's "People's Budget" (1909), the two general elections (1910), the resurgence of the Tariff Reform-Free Trade conflict (1907-10), and the Irish Home Rule Bill (1912).

In the "Retrospect," Startt examines "the general themes bearing upon the work of the imperial journalists" and considers three questions for an assessment of their "collective work": (1) the motivation for their imperial advocacy; (2) was their work "good journalism"; and (3) "the fate of the causes they espoused..." (203) on the first point, he notes that their support for the Empire was motivated by social as well as economic concerns and that "More than anything else, a strong imperial world-view lay at the bottom of their advocacy of Empire..." In sum, they were convinced that "the Empire was crucial to British prosperity, to its defense and foreign policies, and to its world position..." (203-08) As to what contribution the imperial journalists made to the practice of journalism, Startt concludes that the type of political journalism they practiced contributed to "the well being of their craft." Garvin certainly made *The Observer* "a solid journalistic property"; Strachey turned the *Spectator* into "a prosperous publication property"; and Spender established the *Westminster Gazette* as one of the most influential papers in Britain. On the third point, Startt declares that in spite of the imperial journalists success in keeping the problems and images of the Empire in the public debate for over a decade, "the Empire failed to survive the impact of twentieth century forces and redefined national needs..." (218-19) Some of the imperial ideas that these pundits advocated were unworkable, but others emerged in the form of the British Commonwealth.

Despite a few lapses in clarity, this study is a fine accomplishment and an important addition to the history of the British press during a vital decade of the early twentieth century. Its value is well augmented by informative endnotes, a superb bibliography, and an excellent index.

Guido H. Stempel III and John Windhauser, eds. *The Media in the 1984 and 1988 Presidential Campaigns*. Greenwood, 1991. Reviewed by Steve Craig, University of North Texas

With the exception of a brief introductory chapter, this book is a compilation of content analyses of media coverage of the 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns. As such, it is heavily quantitative, using 81 tables to present its findings. The eight chapters include research on campaign news coverage in 17 major newspapers, the three major newsmagazines, and the evening network television newscasts. A final chapter provides a welcome summary of the findings and a brief but useful bibliography of the literature of political journalism concludes the work.

It appears that the editors' primary goal is to examine the validity of charges

of media bias that arose during the period, especially in the 1988 campaign. Their summary largely rejects such charges, arguing that coverage in the media studied was relatively well balanced between the two major candidates. However, they do report evidence that supports the accusation that the media de-emphasized stories on "the issues" during the two campaigns, and that this trend was evident in newspapers and magazines as well as television coverage.

The reported research is methodologically competent and the results are exhaustively documented. However, a troubling aspect of the work is the authors' conceptualization of the important questions they purport to study. Despite much discussion in recent historical and critical literature of the problems associated with defining such terms as "bias" and "objectivity," the book seems relatively unconcerned with the issue. In the brief discussion the conceptualization of bias does get, Stempel writes, "But if a Democratic candidate gets more coverage than a Republican candidate, is that bias, or is it possibly a reflection of the fact that the Democratic candidate made more news?" (p. 8). This suggests that the authors conceive of newsmaking as some sort of natural process that journalists simply record rather than as a social construction based on the subjective decisions of people within the journalism industry who have their own political and economic perspectives, acknowledged or not. For some readers, such a perspective will doubtless raise questions about the focus of the study and the usefulness of the findings.

Some historians may find the data in these studies to be of value in future research, but any conclusions should be approached with caution and a more critical perspective than the authors demonstrate.

S. J. Taylor. *Stalin's Apologist.* Oxford University Press, 1990. 355 pp. $30.00. Reviewed by Ted Stanton, University of Houston

The *New York Times* man in Moscow — a phrase that carried prestige, an aura of authority.

Walter Duranty was not the first *Times* man there, but he covered Russia from the revolution to World War ii, he won a Pulitzer Prize, was lionized by New York cafe society, was a successful (and unsuccessful) author, and was, in the only partly mocking phrase of fellow correspondents, "The Great Duranty."

But not in S. J. Taylor's strong new biography, *Stalin's Apologist.* Nor in the view of some journalists such as columnist Joseph Alsop, who called him a "fashionable prostitute" with "lying (as) his stock in trade."

They contend Duranty betrayed his craft by covering up the devastating Ukrainian famine of 1932-33, which Taylor calls the "greatest manmade disaster ever recorded, exceeding in scale even the Jewish Holocaust."

She vividly portrays a highly intelligent reporter who was on top of one of the great stories of the century but failed to convey its magnitude or its causes to his readers. While Duranty finally conceded there had been "serious food shortages," he still adamantly denied reports of starvation. No, he said, "no actual...deaths from starvation but widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition." Taylor calls it the most "outrageous equivocation of the period."

Duranty, belatedly, went to the Ukraine, reported some suffering, but concluded the trip with stories of renewed praise for the government. Then, astonishingly, he returned to Moscow and in an oral report to the British Embassy pained

a far grimmer picture than he ever reported in the *Times*. In it he estimated the death toll at up to 10 million people, four to five times the total his stories had vaguely indicated. His failure was the greater, Taylor suggests, because of the attention he could have focused on the tragedy through his stature then as perhaps the world's most famous newsman.

Taylor began her extensive research in the late 1970s, and she draws on a wealth of sources, including FBI files opened through a Freedom of Information request and British Foreign Office files. She interviewed Harrison Salisbury, William L. Shirer, and many other journalistic notables who worked with and competed against Duranty for years. She also had access to the voluminous diaries of Duranty's closest friend, "Inside U. S. A." author John Gunther.

Duranty built his reputation through thoughtful, perceptive World War I coverage written in an elegant, personalized style sharply different from other correspondents' work. Friction in the Paris bureau at war's end led Duranty to request assignment to Russia, where he brought with him an anti-Bolshevist attitude shared by most reporters there. Soon, however, he became convinced the Communists would triumph.

He was among the first to report on Stalin's growing strength, coined the term "Stalinism," and was a leader, through his coverage, in the successful effort to win United States recognition of the Soviet government. Two interviews with Stalin added to his luster.

In describing his later, gradual decline, Taylor etches his character flaws as clearly as his professional milestones. Fired by the *Times* in 1940, the man Gunther once described as a "fine mind in the shriveled body of a monkey" continued to write with mixed success, lectured occasionally, and worked sporadically in Hollywood. Finally, in debt, unable to sell his work, Duranty was surviving on the largesse of a Florida woman and loans from Gunther. The woman married him five days before he died at age 73, in 1957.

Taylor's judgments once or twice do not seem to match the material cited, but that is a minor flaw in an excellent, gracefully drawn portrait of a mercurial man, his times and his trade.

Leonard Wilcox. *V. F. Calverton: Radical in the American Grain.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press. x + 304 pp. $44.95 Cloth. Reviewed by Phyllis Zagano, Boston University

George Goetz lived for the first forty years of this century, the latter half of them through the pseudonym V. F. Calverton. An intellectual descendant of the liberal thought of Greenwich Village, he was deeply influenced by Van Wyck Brooks, John Reed and Max Eastman. In 1923 he founded the *Modern Quarterly* in Baltimore, and for seventeen years his salon encouraged and endured debate between and among F. Scott Fitzgerald, Langston Hughes, Scott Nearing, and Norman Thomas.

Leonard Wilcox, who teaches American Studies at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, has produced a thoughtful analysis of the life and work of Goetz turned Calverton, one of the Old Left's most influential spokesmen. V. F. Calverton's literary endeavors centered around the intellectual's ongoing problem of angst in the face of the conflict between individual and community. His passion was "a desire to discover some organic interrelationship between self and

society that could transform American life." His other very evident passions might be seen as related to this intellectual goal.

Calverton's war with the sexual mores of his day extended to his relationships with women — and an insistence that he remain free to experiment with others even when he lived in a common-law marriage. His "free-thinking" and advanced concepts of free love, as promiscuity was then called, present him as an utterly repulsive individual whose intellectual endeavors might reduce themselves to absolute solipsism were he not so broadly engaged by others. His self-involvement was broken only by his intellectual trysts with other like-minded men.

Even so, the journal he masterfully edited became the center of Marxist literary debate, particularly of the 30s. Calverton moved to New York in 1928, and there entered into the common-law marriage with Nina Melville in 1931 from which he compulsively strayed. Against this personal tapestry he constantly investigated the possibility of "the good life." While Lewis Mumford, among others, argued that this goal could be attained by a reorientation of American values rather than by wholesale political changes, Calverton countered that talk about "the good life" was futile until society had been revolutionized to the point so that "the good life" was attainable by all. As Wilcox points out, the intellectual's task was to analyze society and to side with the goals and ideals of the working class.

Wilcox's work reads like an intellectual social register, as he painstakingly documents and details all who crossed Calverton's salon threshold, their views, their arguments and, in many cases, their lovers. He credits the phenomenon of wide and varied intellectual discussion, so successful over such a long period of time, to Calverton's interlocutory skills and intellectual depth. But one must note with caution that the frontispiece photograph shows Calverton well sunk in an easy chair, not far from two bottles of booze.

American literary journalism of the first half of this century was replete with the political and social arguments of the day, and it provides depth for the serious student of American intellectual thought. That Calverton was among its ingenues and shapers is an undeniable fact of journalism history, whether he is likable or not.

Keith M. Wilson. *A Study in the History and Politics of the "Morning Post" 1905-1926.* Studies in British History, vol. 23. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990. 294 pp. $69.95. Reviewed by Joel H. Wiener, City College of New York and the CUNY

Until its untimely death in 1937 by way of amalgamation with the Daily Telegraph, the Morning Post was one of London's famous newspapers. Founded in 1772, thirteen years before its arch-rival, The Times, it consistently espoused conservative views. it especially prospered during the second half of the nineteenth century under its great proprietor-editor, Algernon Borthwick, the first Lord Glenesk. Its political intelligence, foreign reporting, and sports coverage gave it a distinctive edge among many great competitors.

After Lord Glenesk's death in 1908 the paper was taken over by his daughter, Lady Bathurst, in whose hands it deteriorated badly. Its views became outlandishly right-wing. Among other things it viciously attacked Bolsheviks, Irish nationalists, socialists, and, above all, Jews. Its editor, H.A. Gwynne, a man of

considerable ability, sought energetically to promote the paper's traditional policy of "King and Country." All to no avail. Profits and prestige declined catastrophically in the post-war years.

It is this diminished newspaper that Keith M. Wilson writes about in *A Study in the History and Politics of the Morning Post, 1905-1926.* He eschews narrative history and focuses instead on selected episodes. These include the paper's prosecution during World War One for breaching military censorship, its support for a short-lived National party in 1917, its 'Airstrip Venture' of 1909-1912, and intricate disputes and negotiations involving editors and proprietors. None of these incidents are of compelling interest, and although well-documented they add little to the two previous published studies of the paper by Reginald Lucas (1910) and Wilfrid Hindle (1937).

Of considerable interest, however, is Wilson's chapter on the newspaper's anti-Semitism and its publication of the notorious *Protocol of the Elders of Zion* in 1920. This fabricated account of an alleged Jewish conspiracy to control the world was highly touted by Gwynne, who believed that Jewish interests had played a leading part in every modern revolution and were now "trying to wreck the British Empire." At least his journalistic instincts were sound. The newspaper gained about ten thousand new readers as a result of the seventeen articles it published on the subject.

Notwithstanding this temporary stimulus to circulation, it was all but over for the *Morning Post* by the 1920'. In an interesting chapter Wilson shows how Lady Bathurst bled the newspaper financially beginning in 1918 and was compelled to sell it six years later. It was bought by a group led by the Duke of Northumberland, "whose ideas were the same as ours," according to Lady Bathurst. When the *Daily Telegraph* made the final purchase a decade later it marked a notable, if sad landmark in newspaper history.

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